

NOVEMBER

8

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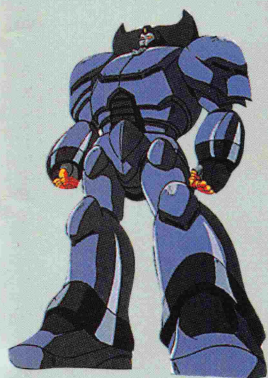


GUNSMITH
CATS

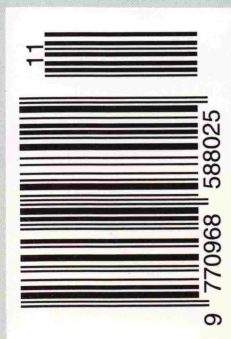
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BABEL II



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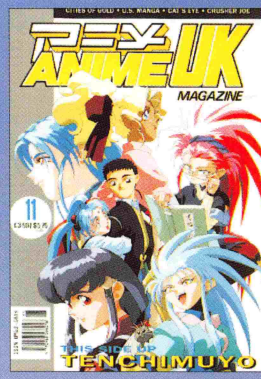
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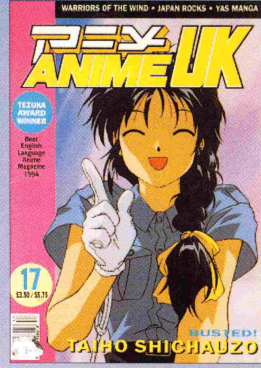
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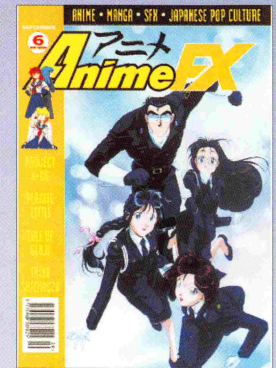
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This is the Chinese character 'wan', meaning 'ending'; the Japanese reading is 'kan', and when you see it, it means you've reached the end of an article or instalment!

OTAKU VOCABULARY

You'll find some Japanese terms crop up again and again. Here are a few definitions:

ANIME	Japanese animation
CHARA	Character
KAWAII	Cute
MANGA	Japanese Comics
MECHA	Mechanical object, ie robot, vehicle, weapon, etc.
OTAKU	Anime fanboy/girl
OVA/OAV	Original Video Animation, anime made for video
SEIYUU	Anime voice actor

KONNICHIWA!

I've never seen anyone gibber by fax before.

Our man in Tokyo, Peter Evans of Sakura Studio, had just got back from the preview of GHOST IN THE SHELL. Now Peter, as regular readers know, is hard to impress; he lives in Tokyo, he goes to previews all the time, he sees more new anime in a month than most people have hot dinners. But there he was, completely blown away, raving about how awesome the film had been. The massive accumulation of skills from director Mamoru Oshii right down the line to the inbetweeners in the cel-painting studios had exactly the effect they planned and worked for. One viewer had entered completely into their world and come out with a sense of wonder enhancement.

The force of his delight reminded me of two very important experiences of my own. The first was when I was about fourteen and visited the great mediaeval cathedral of Chartres for the first time; the second was just over five years ago when I first saw TONARI NO TOTORO. In both cases I was stunned by the power and beauty of the artists' vision and left with a lasting memory of pure joy at seeing something so perfect, and a sense of wonder upgrade of my own.

That's what most of us hope for from our entertainment. Whether we read, listen to music, watch TV or film, create crafts, look at pictures, whatever we do, we're looking for that rush of pleasure, combined with the awareness that our standards of excellence have been raised a little higher, because we have once again seen proof that marvellous things are possible.

It doesn't matter whether every work of art or entertainment reaches that superb standard; in fact, it's probably better that most don't. We all need different kinds of enjoyment and involvement at different times, and a good belly laugh at a simple piece of slapstick, or a powerdrive session at a game console, is as enjoyable at the right moment as a symphony or a great novel. What's important is that some works reach those heights and take us there with them. We become so absorbed by them and find ourselves so involved in the range of emotions they evoke that for a while we can see new universes, new possibilities. We believe once again, as we did when we were very young, that magic can happen and that the wonderful and the possible walk hand in hand. Our world expands.

The sense of wonder is one of our most neglected and most important assets. I'm glad anime evokes and strengthens that seventh sense, for Peter, for me and for all of you. Whether TOTORO, GHOST IN THE SHELL or any other work is *the one* that activates your own sense of wonder isn't important; just don't be too cool, too blasé to let it happen. The sense of wonder is one of the impulses that activates the imagination, and imagination's a muscle like any other - use it or lose it.

Yours animatedly,

Helen McCarthy
 Editor

Front Cover: GUNSMITH CATS picture by kind permission of Kodansha with the invaluable assistance of Sakura Studio

Thanks to Gary Marshall for helping out with the design and computer rendering on the BABEL II feature.

Picture Right: DEVIL HUNTER NE-CHAN by Andy Hepworth

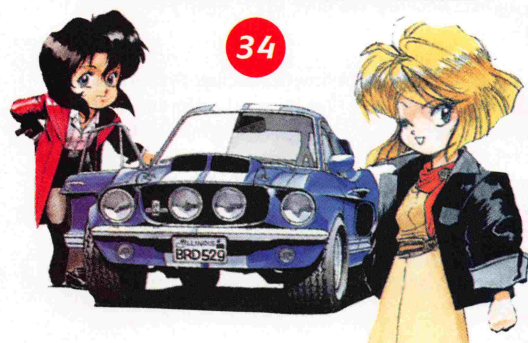
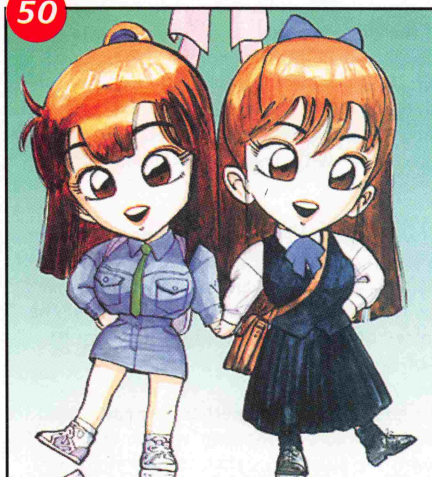


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ATTENTION READERS EVERYWHERE!

Many of you have written to us asking us to send birthday greetings or special messages, advertise swaps or carry your personal wants lists. We couldn't - but now you can!

For just 30p per word (minimum 10 words) your message or request can appear in AFX CLASSIFIED and reach fans all over the world! And fanclubs, zines and conventions can use this service too! All classified ads must be prepaid (by credit card or cheque/PO in UK funds only) and if paying by credit card you can place your ad by phone. To find out how, call Barry or Janet on 01403 711511 in Europe, or call Julie on 513 353 4052 for American rates and bookings.

EUROPE

EUROCONVENTIONAL

Helen McCarthy and Steve Kyte were guests at FACTS IV, the one-day convention devoted to Fantasy, Anime, Comics, Toys and Science Fiction, held in Belgium on 1st October. Look out for a con report in the next issue!

Birmingham, England, is the venue for ReConTanimet, the anime con that crams more new shows into its programme than most. It's being held from 3-5 November in the Grand Hotel so if you're reading this you might just have time to register! Call Lewis Sharman on 01295 256284 (evenings) or e-mail conT@pop3.hiway.co.uk for information.

GHOST TO PREVIEW AT LFF

The London Film Festival will host a special preview screening of GHOST IN THE SHELL before its December cinema release on 20 screens Nationwide. The screening will take place on Saturday 11th November, a week after the Birmingham anime convention ReConTaminated. It's at the Odeon 2, Leicester Square, at 11.30p.m., and the tickets are £7.50. Bookings can be made on 0171 928 3232. Members of the British Film Institute have priority until 27th October after which anyone can book to see this much-talked-about film.



KISEKI STARBLAZERS OFFER

The STARBLAZERS comic by Tim Eldred, published by Argo Press, is now available in the UK. However many British fans missed out on issue 0, which gives the background to the story and information about the anime series and films. Kiseki are making a special offer to STARBLAZERS and YAMATO fans - a copy of issue 0 for just £1, plus 75p postage and packing. Make cheques/POs (UK funds only) payable to Kiseki Films, and send your order to them at 5 & 6 Parkside, Ravenscourt Park, London W6 0UU.

PIONEER SAYS ANIME IS FOR EVERYONE

In the past few years, the 'manga movies' phenomenon has been associated in the UK press and the minds of the British public with sexually explicit and violent programming aimed at the teenage and young adult male market. When Pioneer LDCE launched their own UK video label it was with a firm commitment to releasing the kind of high-quality, contemporary animation for which the company is

renowned in Japan, but aiming it at a much broader and less exclusive market sector.



To demonstrate its commitment to the medium and its future as part of the mainstream entertainment market in Britain, the company has now created a specially designed generic ANIME logo which will span all its advertising, merchandising and marketing activity. The new logo is designed to create an association with high quality and enable viewers to recognise Japanese animation videos bearing it as original and sophisticated entertainment for all ages and sexes, suitable for those looking for something more than the tits'n'tentacles excess which is the general public perception of 'manga films'.

The company hopes that apart from challenging misconceptions and

expanding the potential market, this move will enable anime to gain the mainstream credibility that it has long deserved. The benefits won't just be restricted to Pioneer's own tapes bearing their exclusive ANIME logo; other companies and their customers will benefit from a clearer understanding of the breadth and scope of the medium. (A similar tactic has been employed in Spain by respected distribution company Oro Films, who licensed the Manga Video name and logo for their line of adult anime videos, but created their own label, also called Anime, for less explicit material.)

'ANIME SENSHI' SPRING INTO ACTION

In another innovative attempt to improve the image of anime in the UK, Pioneer LDCE have recruited three young female fans to help convince the media that Japanese animation has plenty to offer young women. AFX readers Lisa Munns, Autumn Robson and Lisa Tse have each written a piece on why anime is good for girls, and Pioneer's media representative, Cathy Beck, is circulating their comments to the press in the hope that their arguments may convince dismissive journalists and editors to give anime a little more consideration. Cathy comments "The girls' work is outstanding", and thinks that their arguments should persuade anyone that there's more to Japanese animation than sex and violence.



ANIME IN GERMANY

The September/October 95 issue of that excellent German language magazine ANIMANIA has a mouth-watering listing of anime on seven channels of German TV this autumn. As well as the anime series versions of classic novels including TREASURE ISLAND, A LITTLE PRINCESS, PETER PAN, LITTLE WOMEN, ANNE OF GREEN GABLES, AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS and POLLYAN-

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NA, German fans can see Ryoko Ikeda's historical epic ROSE OF VERSAILLES (under its European title LADY OSCAR), heartrending Aussie soap series LADY GEORGIE (as GEORGIE), sports series like the football show GANBARE! KICKERS (as KICKERS), volleyball series ATTACK. NO. 1 (as MILA SUPER-STAR), and the adventures of rhythm gymnastics superstar Hikari in HIKARI NO DENSETSU (as DIE KLEINEN SUPERSTARS). SF fans aren't forgotten, with showings of VOLTRON (id.), URASHIMAN (as ROCK'N'COP) and BISMARK (as SABER RIDER). And if you can't resist cute, what about CHOPPY UND DIE PRINZESSIN, better known as Osamu Tezuka's masterpiece RABON NO KISHI, or the adventures of an almost-human hound and his young mistress in HALLO KURT, known in Japan as OHAYO SPANK! SAMURAI PIZZA CATS and SPEED RACER also get rescreenings, as does the wonderful MYSTERIOUS CITIES OF GOLD and ROBIN HOOD, a series recreating the boyhood adventures of the hero, whose villain, Gilbert, has quite a following among AFX's female readers!

USA

FESTIVE SAOTOME

Viz Video has two new Ranma releases just in time for the festive season - now you can have the boy AND girl of your dreams in your Christmas stocking! The first of the RANMA 1/2 COLLECTORS EDITION OAV tapes contains three RANMA OAVs in uncut, subtitled format, including the seasonal *Tendo Family Christmas Scramble*. The latest vol-

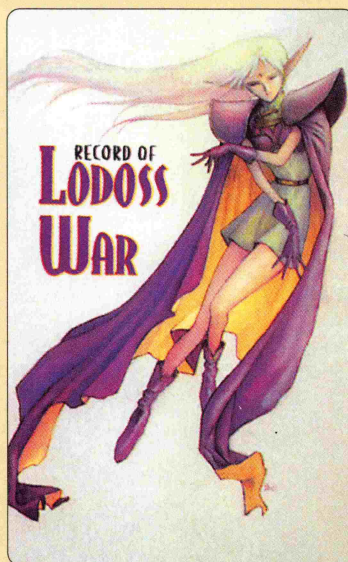
ume of RANMA 1/2 ANYTHING-GOES MARTIAL ARTS features the search for the second and third of the Nan-nii-chuan urns, dubbed into English by the usual popular voice cast. From Viz Video via Viz Shop-by-Mail or from your retailer.

AMERICAN MAINSTREAM REPORTS ON ANIME

Fred Patten reports that THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER'S October 3rd issue, devoted to International Animation, has good coverage of the worldwide animation scene including Japan's contribution. Since DAILY VARIETY published its own special animation edition in September and managed to ignore anime completely, it's nice to see another international entertainment journal redressing the balance. THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER is also available in the UK and in some specialist outlets in Europe. US and Canadian readers have also seen coverage in the Fall 95 issue of YOLK, a pop-culture magazine in English for young Asians (coily referred to as "the new Generasian") available on Asian community news-stands and covering such topics as HELLO KITTY, GODZILLA, anime, Kung Fu books and current Asian stars like Robin Shou of MORTAL KOMBAT.

NATIONAL ELF SPECIAL FOR CHRISTMAS?

Central Park Media have announced an addition to their popular line of Japanese animation phonecards. The first 10-card limited edition set is already a hit with fans and collectors, but the new, numbered card will be even more exclusive - it will only be available free in the first 1000 RECORD OF LODOSS WAR



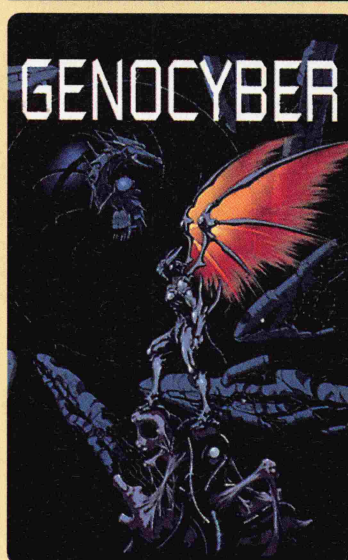
gift boxed sets. What's more, it features artwork created by LODOSS chara designer Yutaka Izubuchi *exclusively* for this phonecard - a beautiful picture of elf warrior Deedlit. And to make the offer even more irresistible, the boxed set is on sale at the special price of \$129.95 - \$50 *cheaper* than buying each volume individually! Three special incentives to get this superb gift set from your retailer, or contact CPM direct for details of retailers who offer a mail order service at 250 W. 57th Street, Suite 317, New York, NY 10107, USA.

FALLEN ANGELS, MURKY MAGIC

U-Jin's erotic manga and anime creation ANGEL returns on tape in NEW ANGEL 2, out in November from SoftCel Pictures. Two subtitled versions, the uncut 35-minute tape and the 'softer' general-release 30-minute edit, show even more sides to the remarkably lucky Keisuke as he tries to keep himself out of the frame of a lecherous photographer, in the picture with three beautiful girls, and in place for a rescue when a young woman tries to throw herself off a building. SoftCel also release the next volume of the adventures of those *wicked* witches Irene and Chipple in MAGICAL TWILIGHT 2. Two witches, one human girl, one hot tub and a row that derails the Bullet Train add up to trouble! A wild present for the hormonally overactive over-18s on your gift list. From your retailer, distributed by Central Park Media Corp.

KITAZUME TO ATTEND ANIMEast

New Brunswick will be *the* place to be from 10-12 November when



Above: Central Park Media's limited edition Lodoss Phone Card, The Lodoss War Box set and one of their series of anime phone cards

chara designer and director Hiroyuki Kitazume, renowned for his work on material as diverse as GUNDAM, ROBOT CARNIVAL and MOLDDIVER, is Guest of Honour at ANIMEast. He will be joined by established ANIMEast favourites Monkey Punch and singer Mio, whose sensational voice was one of the highlights of last year's convention. There's still time to register for the convention - contact the friendly folks at RADIUM DYNAMIX for information, tel (001) 908 382 6365

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Kitazume's MOLdiver

JAPAN

SAKURA STUDIO RECOMMENDS

Just re-released in compilation volumes, 600 yen each - Hiroshi Aro's classic YOU AND ME, a personal favourite of Away Team AFX's Peter Evans, who recommends that you rush down to your nearest manga store and get the first two volumes, out now, ordering the third for when it's released next month. The publisher is Shueisha, the ISBN for Vol 1 is 48342 - 1451 - 6, and for vol 2 48342 - 1452 - 4.

COMIC BOX KOBE SPECIAL

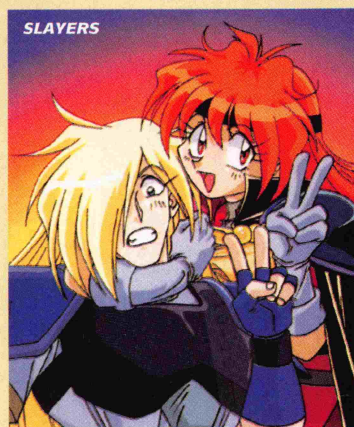
Early in September, just after issue 7 went to press, we received a copy of the COMIC BOX August 95 issue. Their hundredth volume marks the Kobe earthquake of January 1995 with messages of hope to the kids of Kobe from 257 mangaka and international artists. It costs 750 yen and all proceeds are going to a fund for children damaged by the quake, whether through injury, loss of family or loss of their homes. A report from the Osamu Tezuka Manga Museum, damaged in the quake, sketches by Ryuzan Aki and



photos by Shinji Nagashima recording the situation in June, a feature on disaster manga, and many messages of hope and goodwill fill this wonderful issue. It costs 750 yen a copy plus postage and you can find out how to order by writing to COMIC BOX, FUSION PRODUCT, 2-12-21-102 Asagiya-kita, Suginamiku, Tokyo 166, JAPAN; fax (00 81) 3 5373 5783.

SLAYERS GOODIES OUT NOW!

Lots of presents from the current hot fantasy universe are available right now. The eighth SLAYERS novel, *The Fearful Future*, is in process of being serialised in *Dragon* magazine; the comic is running in *Dragon Junior*, and already has a side story, *Shadow Tale*. Kadokawa also publish *The Slayers Guide*, a complete TV episode guide, *Slayers: The Comic of The Movie*, and *Slayers Calendar 1996*. And for gamers there are two new SLAYERS outings, *Slayers RPG* and *Operation Danjon*, on the Magius RPG system.



GAINAX RETURNS! NEON GENESIS EVANGELION

Long-awaited and here at last, Gainax' first work since 1991 commenced on 4th October and is now showing every Wednesday evening on TV Tokyo. Newtype describes it



NEON GENESIS EVANGELION

as 'high-quality sf hero anime made by acknowledged masters'; the Gainax team gave the world ROYAL SPACE FORCE: WINGS OF HONNEAMISE, AIM FOR THE TOP! GUNBUSTER, NADIA OF THE MYSTERIOUS SEAS (aka *Secret of Blue Water*) and the two unforgettable OTAKU NO VIDEO OAVs, and are one of the most original creative teams in the anime field. The story is set in the year 2015, 15 years after the first encounter between humanity and the evil aliens known as The Apostles. Earth is on a war footing and fourteen-year-old Jinji Ikaru, son of scientist and secret organisation leader Genji Ikaru, becomes involved in the Evangelion Mecha Project. After meeting Rei, a young girl who has been injured during the tests of the Evangelion prototype, Jinji becomes a pilot and finds himself training with the alcoholic and psychotic Misato (who looks ever so slightly like Kasumi from GUNBUSTER and is described in the press release as 'super one-san' (big sister). Among the stellar voice cast are Megumi Hayashibara (Rei), Kotono Mitsuishi (Misato), and Yuriko Yamaguchi (Evangelion team leader Ritsuko). The animation has been produced by Gainax in conjunction with Tatsunoko Studios, chara designs are by Yoshiyuki Sadamoto and the director is, of course, the indelicately talented Hideaki Anno. After such a long absence from the scene, let's hope that this series signals a new creative spring for Gainax.

ALSO ON TV TOKYO, more adventures of the EL HAZARD crew, based on the popular OAV series from Pioneer LDC, and the animated version of Sega's game BACHAFIGHTER.

OAV ACTION

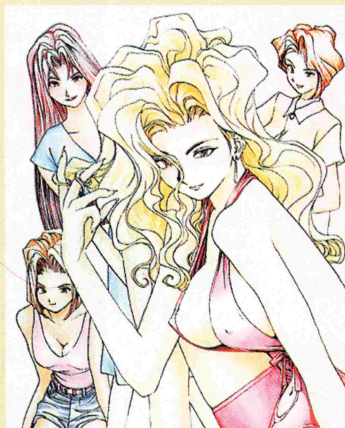
YOSEI HIME REINE (Fairy Princess Reine) is the story of a boy treasure hunter, a fairy princess from another dimension, a cute'n'deadly sorceress and corporate skulduggery in an ancient town. Another essay in *kawaii* from KSS.

Also from KSS, GOLDEN BOY is the story of Taro, a law student at prestigious Tokyo University. Like most students he looks for a part-time job, and lands right in heaven when he gets a place as janitor in a computer company where all the employees, from the chairperson down, are beautiful women. The chairperson drives a Ferrari and looks like a very proper lady, but what's under that quiet exterior? Taro is about to find out! Based on the manga by Tatsuya Edogawa (who is also credited as executive producer and special guest voice actor on the anime version!) and published by Shueisha, the OAV series is in six parts.

HYPERDOLLS is another anime based on manga, this time from Tokuma Shoten's Monthly Captain Comic, by Nobuyuki Ito. Mica and Mew are a two-woman alien team charged with defending the planet Earth; they are, of course, working undercover, disguised as - yes, you guessed it! - seventeen-year-old Japanese schoolgirls. Mica, who calls herself Maika Minazugi, is cool, calm, collected and very honourable. Mew, whose Earth name is Myu Fumizuki, is just the opposite, hot-tempered, chaotic and unreliable. Both can transform at will into the Hyperdolls, and when they do, trouble's coming!

newscan

YOSEI HIME REINE



GOLDENBOY

The third Ginrei side story from the GIANT ROBO universe, GINREI'S BLUE EYES sets our heroine down in an oasis in the midst of an unknown desert. Fedain and his son Ludo will guide her and her companions across the desert in search of the evil Chandana. Fanboys are guaranteed at least one bathing scene ...

SPACE CRUISER YOKO YAMAMOTO

The popular CD drama is now being animated as an OAV. The story will be familiar to anyone who saw *THE LAST STARFIGHTER*; Yoko is an average schoolgirl (what else?) who doesn't realise that the arcade games she plays with her friends are really entrance exams for intergalactic wargames, dreamed up by Rosen, a scientist from 2990 who has hit on the idea of recruiting pilots by tapping the rich pool of twentieth-century talent. She finds herself aboard the starship Terra, engaged in a continual war with the other half of the rem-

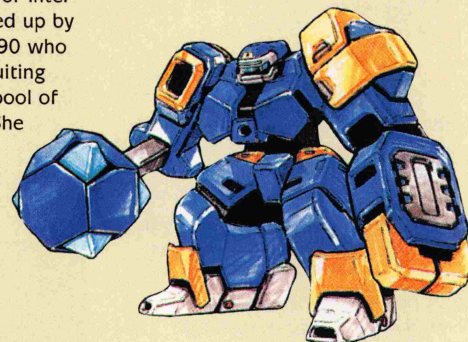
nants of humanity, now living on another starship, Ness. Seiyuu include Megumi Hayashibara and Mika Kanai, with Minami Takayama as Yoko.

MACROSS 7 : FIRE BOMBER SHOCK NEWS!

The new 2-episode OAV miniseries MACROSS KINGDOM, released with the videos of the TV episodes, makes a shocking revelation - Ray Loverock of *Fire Bomber* is actually lead singer Basara Nekki's father! It seems that, like many a rock star before him, Ray has been lying about his age, as well as keeping this secret hidden in his past. The first episode of MACROSS KINGDOM, *Onstage*, makes this revelation among its peeps into the early lives of the members of *Fire Bomber*; we also see Bihida's Zentraedi past and some of Mirene's childhood memories, already showcased in a 'photo-feature' in NewType magazine.

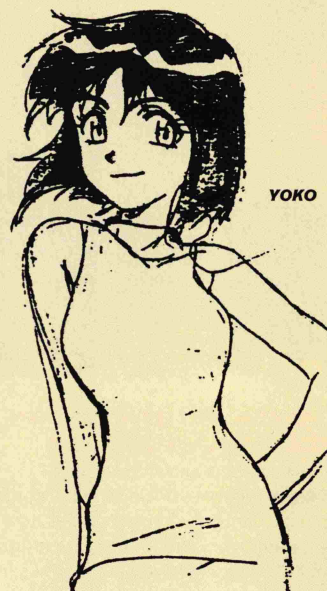
TOYS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Mamoru Nagano has released his 1994 lithograph collection, BRIDGE, a haunting set of images from this wildly original draughtsman. You can also get TALES OF JOKER 5, his latest FIVE STAR STORIES collection, and a Knight of Gold telephone card among other goods from his merchandising company Toys Parcel.

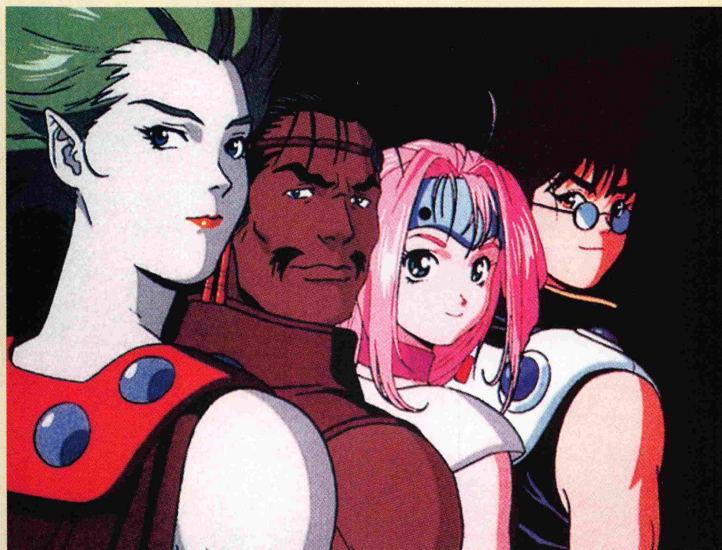


NEW IN THE ARCADES

renowned GUNDAM designer Hajime Katoki has designed a whole new set of robots called virtualoids for the latest arcade game from Sega Enterprises. Designed by AM3, who brought you Sega Rally, CYBERWARRIOR VIRTUALON features combats in a future world without human beings - just deserted towns and landscapes for you to fight in. There are eight 'virtualoids' with different weapons configurations and merits varying from lightness and speed to heavy armour and powerful weaponry, from the 'female-pattern' VR Fei Yen and VR Viper II with its vernier jets to the heavy-armoured mace-carrying VR Dorkas.



newscan



LITTLE BOXES

Well, pretty big ones, really ... the new VOTOMS Complete Collection Box 1 gives you VOTOMS on laserdisk, 700 minutes of the best in mechwar anime for Y42,000, or about £300. At less than 50p a minute that's a bargain. Fans of mecha shows can also pick up the HEAVY METAL L-GAIM Memorial Box Mark 1, with the first 26 episodes of the 54 episode TV series giving 660 minutes of action and drama for the same price. Meanwhile the second PATLABOR OAV series is also available as a boxed set, offering ten more hours of adventure with the Mobile Police for Y36,000. These big, expensive boxed sets are hard to get outside Japan, but your specialist retailer, or shops with a mail order service like Sheffield Space Centre, Nikaku Animart or Kimono My House, might be able to help you.

learn from 40 years of know-how", they say, and if you speak fluent Japanese and have a place to crash in Chiyoda, Tokyo, you can phone or fax them and find out more. There's a freephone number inside Japan, 0120 108 515, and from outside Japan you can phone on 0081 3 5281 2730, fax 0081 3 5281 2727.

Above left: HEAVY METAL L-GAIM

Above right: MACROSS 7

Below and right: GINREI'S BLUE EYES

HOW TO ANIME

The many readers who write to us asking where they can learn to become an animator might be interested to know that the Toei Animation Institute has, at the time of writing, 150 places on its new year's courses. 50 of those places are on the relatively new Digital Creation course; there are 25 places in Design, 10 in Planning & Production, 10 in Screenwriting, 25 on the Director's Course and 35 on the Animator's Course. "Come and



MANGA IN FOCUS



THE COCKPIT

Jim Swallow looks at Leiji Matsumoto's wartime drama series.

Leiji Matsumoto's name is most often spoken in connection with his most famous works, SPACE PIRATE CAPTAIN HARLOCK, SPACE CRUISER YAMATO (released here in the UK by Kiseki as STAR BLAZERS), GALAXY EXPRESS 999 and THE QUEEN OF A THOUSAND YEARS. His eccentric and retrograde style of science fiction imagery is instantly recognisable, and often evokes thoughts of a more 'valves and switches' age, rather than a streamlined push button tomorrow. Small wonder, then, that a large part of Matsumoto's unseen (by Western readers) back catalogue of manga concentrates not on future times but on 20th century events. Growing up with an officer father in the Imperial Army Air Force, Leiji later turned his childhood memories of the Second World War (he was just seven years old when the war ended) into a fascination with mecha and hardware in his manga works. The effects of the war and the atomic bombings had a strong influence on his writings, appearing time and again as echoes and subplots in many of his stories. Witness the nuclear devastation of Earth in YAMATO, the surrender of the Government in HARLOCK, and so on. But the manga which explored his feelings on World War II in by far the most depth was SENJO, a word that can mean 'battlefield' as well as 'cockpit' (though the latter was chosen for the animated version).

The COCKPIT manga series ran for sixty-two stories in Shogakukan's weekly anthology BIG COMIC ORIGINAL from 1973 to 1978 (incidentally at the height of Matsumoto's sf fame) and is still available in nine hard-

back volumes from many Japanese bookstores. While Matsumoto did occasionally return to war stories during his HARD METAL series in the '86-'90 BIG COMICS, his COCKPIT work is regarded as his best. The common basic theme of all the stories was an examination of the futility of war and the strength of people tied by bonds of duty and honour. Seemingly pessimistic and downbeat at first glance, Matsumoto's COCKPIT tales were often tragi-comic in nature, and they always held a strong sense of defiant heroism against terrible, unbeatable odds. The majority of the stories dealt with a German or Japanese view of the war without resorting to caricatures or racist stereotypes to depict the other side. Often the enemy would be portrayed as an honourable foe every bit as doomed as the heroes, or sometimes as merely a bit-player in the main story.

Many of Matsumoto's visuals seem mismatched, with exaggerated 'cartoony' characters mixed in with scenery and mechanical hardware rendered in ultra-accurate detail. Closer examination reveals that the difference in perceived 'realness' serves to heighten the dramatic narrative. Agony, anguish, dedication and humour all play important roles in the COCKPIT stories, and, combined with his skill in simulating cinematic effects through art panels, Matsumoto creates war tales akin to BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER KWAI or THE BLUE MAX, as opposed to THE GUNS OF NAVARONE and WHERE EAGLES DARE - realism, as opposed to fantasy.

While many of the stories centred on

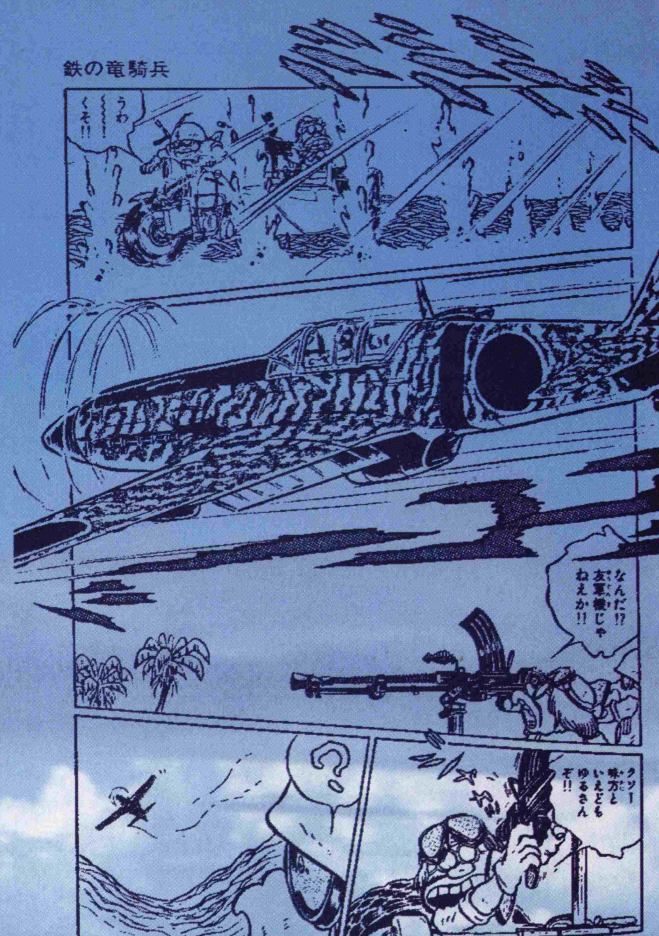
aviation, Matsumoto's love of military hardware and mecha in general led him to write and draw stories of tanks and battleships as well as fighters and bombers. Many of the COCKPIT instalments were adapted by Matsumoto in his classic CAPTAIN HARLOCK movie MY YOUTH IN ARCADIA; Harlock's ancestry is established as dating back to World War II, hence the film's subplot revolving around the antique Messerschmidt REV-C12D gunsight, a Harlock family heirloom. Among the COCKPIT plots used are 'Arcadia of my Youth', featuring the original ace pilot Phantom F. Harlock and the ancestor of the space pirate's engineer Tochio, and 'The Witch of the Stanleys', a reference to the 12,000 foot high Owen Stanley mountain range, changed to a dangerous 'flame presence' space anomaly in the anime. The character of Harlock-as-pilot also appears in Matsumoto's 'Afrika Squadron' (flying a Messerschmidt bf109g fighter) and 'Pilot 262' (flying a Messerschmidt Me 262 jet fighter-bomber).

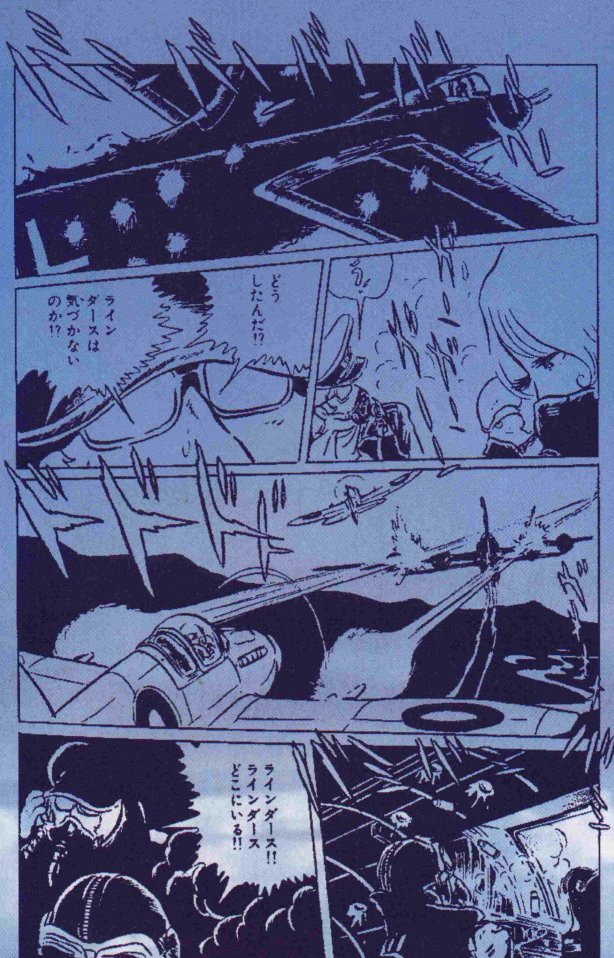
Examples of particular stories that illustrate the COCKPIT ethos include '90 Degree Crash Dive', wherein a Japanese test pilot pushes his aircraft and himself to the limit in the hope of breaking the sound barrier (in a prop-driven aircraft, no less), only to lose plane after plane, as well as a leg, arm, eye, and eventually his life. Here the foe is the barrier, not the ever-encroaching Americans, and the battlefield is within. By contrast, '365 Days Of Blue Sky' follows the misfortunes of a torpedo bomber crew tasked to ferry a captured spy from a remote island airstrip in an unarmed reconnaissance plane, only to come across a

weaponless American Helldiver. Unable to fire at their enemy, the two crews end up pulling rude faces at each other in lieu of shooting ... Sadly, THE COCKPIT is virtually unavailable in a translated form for Western readers, with the exception of a single story ('Ghost Warrior') which appears among several sample manga segments in Frederik L. Schodt's MANGA! MANGA! THE WORLD OF JAPANESE COMICS. While some high quality fan-translated COCKPIT manga exist, a mainstream comics studio has yet to pick up these, or any other Matsumoto manga titles, for English-language publication.

The animated COCKPIT has fared better, due for a UK release very soon with a probable US release to follow. Put together in 1993 (a mere decade-and-a-half since the last manga story), the animated feature was released in Japan as a three-volume Original Animation Video series. Each volume contained a different, self-contained story, and, as befits an anthology, each was produced by a different director and studio. The stories were adapted from COCKPIT manga instalments, and Matsumoto helmed the series in a 'executive' position, his first anime work since the late eighties. He was assisted in some aspects by Art Director Geki Katsumata, who worked on YAMATO, GALAXY EXPRESS 999 and QUEEN OF A THOUSAND YEARS with him, as well as on ZEGUY, JUNGLE EMPEROR, TECHNOLICE 21C and WHAT'S MICHAEL?

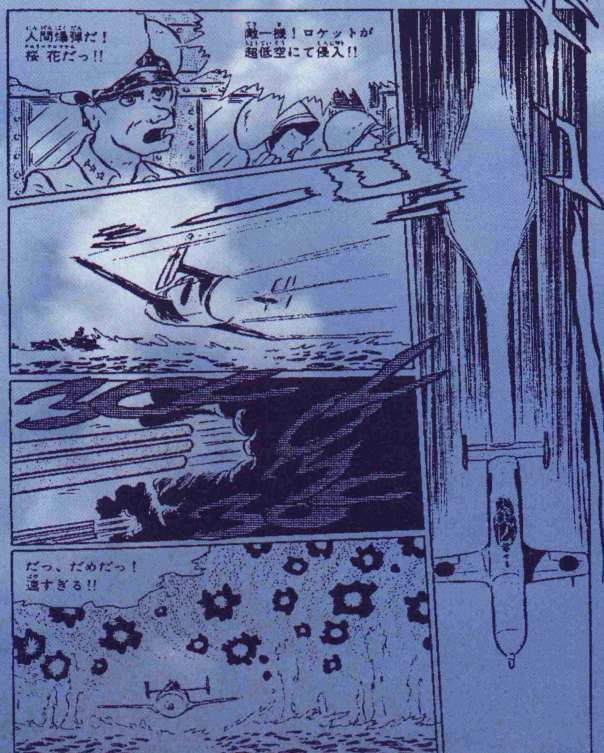
Volume One, 'Slipstream', is directed by Yoshiaki Kawajiri (LENSMAN, WIND OF AMNESIA, WICKED CITY, CYBER





Top left: "Knight of the Iron Dragon"

Above: "Slipstream" Below: "Sonic Boom Squadron"



CITY OEDO 808, MONSTER CITY, NINJA SCROLL) and produced by Madhouse (home of DOOMED MEGALOPOLIS and many other hit titles). With strong echoes of the Phantom F. Harlock character, 'Slipstream's tragic hero Erhardt von Rheindars is a Luftwaffe air ace, tasked to fly his prototype Focke-Wulf Tank 152H1 fighter on escort duty with a captured American B-17 Flying Fortress at the

end of the war - a task complicated by the appearance of his scientist mentor Professor Vafstein, his daughter (and Erhardt's former lover) Melhenna, and the B-17's deadly cargo - an atomic bomb bound for the V2 missile launch site at Peenemunde. Unable to contemplate the horrific destruction an A-Bomb will wreak, Erhardt and Melhenna make a doomed, unspoken pact, and he is forced to leave the

bomber defenceless in the face of attacking Spitfires, rather than allow its nuclear weapon to reach a target.

Volume Two, 'Sonic Boom Squadron' (also translated as 'Supersonic Squadron') is directed by Takashi Imanishi (GUNDAM 0083 : STARDUST MEMORIES), featuring mechanical drawings by fellow GUNDAM designer Hajime Katoki, and is produced by Jamco Video. In this tale, young ensign Nogami, the pilot of a kamikaze rocket plane (an aircraft known as the 'Cherry Blossom'), who failed his first mission, must fly again with the ragtag crew of an aged 'Betty' bomber to fulfil his fatal destiny. Like 'Slipstream', 'Sonic Boom Squadron' features some spectacular aerial combat scenes comparable with live-action movies like MEMPHIS BELLE and THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY. This segment also contains a neat play on the similarities of men in war. In the scene where the rocket plane strikes the American aircraft carrier, a young sailor races onto the bridge with a message for the Captain; aside from his uniform, the sailor is identical to the doomed Japanese kamikaze pilot.

The third and final volume, 'Knight of the Iron Dragon', is directed by Ryosuke Takahashi (ARMoured TROOPER VOTOMS) and produced by the Visual 80 studio. Unlike the two previous aviation-centred stories, 'Knight ...' is a ground-pounders tale featuring some of Matsumoto's trademark character designs. Here, the story focusses on Private Utsunomiya, a Japanese soldier desperate to return to his base despite its imminent capture by the American forces. He teams

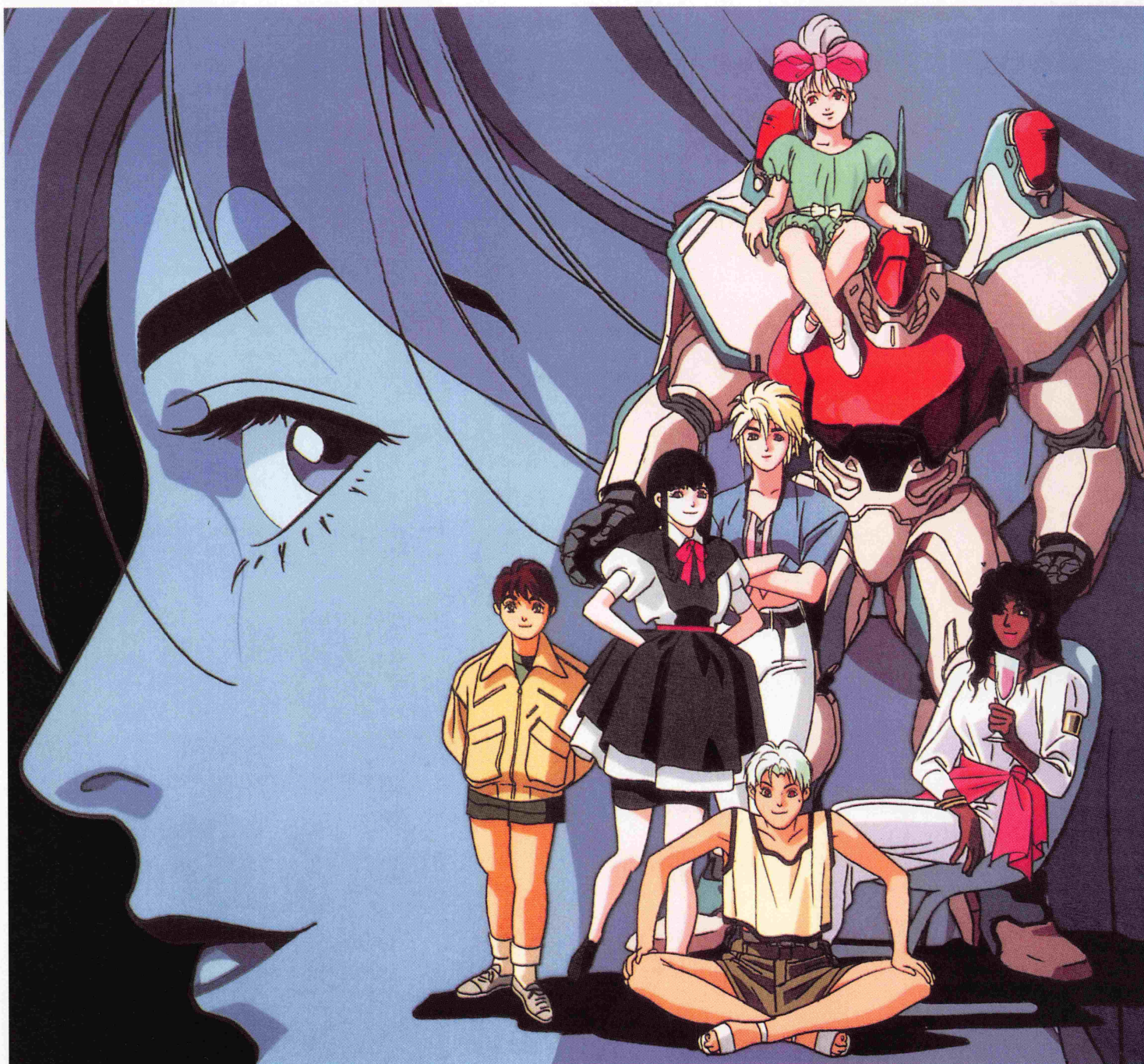
up with Private Kodai, a sassy motorcyclist, and the duo take a sidecar ride through danger and enemy fire to reach Utsunomiya's comrades, even though he knows they may already be dead.

In all the animated stories as well as the manga versions, it is this idea of dedication (to honour, to the mission, to comrades) in the face of certain defeat that is THE COCKPIT's message. Combined with dynamic animation from a trio of talented directors, this enables the anime to capture both the essential energy of the action sequences and the poignant melancholy of the dramatic. Matsumoto also uses his arena to plant subtle signals and allusions to his anti-war, anti-nuclear feelings. As the first anime war movie to be released on video in the UK, THE COCKPIT is a landmark not only because of its excellence, but also because it serves to indicate the breadth of the medium to an audience familiar only with science fiction, fantasy, horror and comedy. Released this year on the 50th anniversary of VJ day and the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atom bombings, THE COCKPIT is a fitting and timely epitaph to the folly of war.

Subtitled for the first time for a Western audience, THE COCKPIT will be released in November by Kiseki Films with all three OAVs on a single tape. A dubbed version may follow later if demand warrants it.

Special thanks to Jonathan Clements, Frederik L. Schodt and John Ott for their sterling work on the various incarnations of THE COCKPIT





SOL BIANCA

It's been two years since we last featured this minor classic, on the occasion of its US release by A.D. VISION. At last it's available in the UK from KISEKI FILMS. Time to look again at one of the most intriguing female teams in anime - and who better to do it than our own dynamic duette HELEN MCCARTHY and JULIA SERTORI?

THE SISTERHOOD

The crew of the SOL BIANCA are sometimes referred to as 'sisters', though this doesn't imply a blood relationship. Indeed, it's unlikely that Feb comes from the same genetic mould as Janny, and in the case of June blood relationship is impossible, as the story reveals. The term is used to imply their close bond of loyalty and mutual interest; they are 'chosen' sisters, rather than

'born' ones. And they're not all flesh and blood ... their ship and its computer are just as much part of the group.

SOL BIANCA

The ship herself is an important member of the team, part-sentient, the 'body' of an intelligence with whom it lives in a kind of symbiosis. She has an outer hull made of the rare metal *pasha*, a superconductor which can radically increase many kinds of power output. This makes her hugely valuable and many people would like to get their hands on her or try and copy her. They wouldn't have much luck, since she is not of human origin and most of her technology can't be duplicated. She is a survivor of the great disaster which wiped out most of her sister ships and their alien pilots. Among her unusual capabilities are the ability to make hyperspace

jumps without using a jump gate (necessary to all human ships), to withstand the pressure of gravity wells at far deeper levels than human ships, and even make a jump from deep inside a gravity well. She also has an array of unusual weapons.

G

G is the intelligence which inhabits the SOL BIANCA, the 'brain' to its 'brawn'. Very little information is available on G, but we know that it is pair-bonded to their pilot, June.

JUNE ASHEL

She looks young, cute and human; she is actually a symbiotic being so closely linked to G that when the SOL BIANCA is damaged she feels pain and could die. Despite her human appearance, with long dark hair, dark brown eyes, pale skin and freckles, her internal organs are quite different. She's usually calm and logical and her link with the ship makes her a superb pilot and communications expert.

FEB FALL

The leader of the team, Feb is a tall, graceful black woman with long, wavy hair. She dresses elegantly, preferring an overtly 'feminine' style with long or slit skirts and deep necklines, likes to drink, and seems languid and indolent. Under this deceptive exterior is a steel core, and the others respect her ability to lead even if it's not always in evidence!

JANNY MANN

Tall, tanned and white-blonde, but with brown eyes, Janny is overtly 'masculine', the Aryan yin to Feb's yang. Her personality fits this mould - she's short-tempered, aggressive and usually spoiling for a fight. In the Japanese, she even talks like a man, using distinctive masculine

speech forms and words. Her knowledge of the martial arts helps her out in sticky situations.

APRIL BIKIRK

Number two to Feb, April's character is a sort of halfway house between Janny's butch approach and Feb's languid femininity. She's a bit of a tomboy, pale, with short blonde hair and blue eyes. She's a good team player but is willing to take action on her own when she thinks it's necessary.

SYNOPSIS

OAV 1

The SOL BIANCA crew find a young stowaway, Rim, hidden among their latest captured cargo and are tempted by his stories of a renowned mystical treasure, the Golden Box or Gnosis, to go with him to planet Torres in search of it. Torres is ruled by a wicked despot who has been oppressing Rim's home planet, Uno, but the team decides to go after the treasure



MAY JESSICA

May's extreme cuteness, taste for girly gear and big pink bows, and under-age appearance are very deceptive. She's a first-rate mechanic and good in a fight despite her squeals and giggles. Her eyes are brown, her hair is pale, almost white in some shots, lilac in others, and she wears it long and tied up in a ponytail with one of those great big pink bows!

anyway. Under attack as they approach the planet, the ship can't jump out of danger with Rim aboard, so April, Jun and Janny take him down to the surface in the shuttle while Feb and May take the ship into subspace to make repairs. Unfortunately the shuttle crew are ambushed and caught by evil Battros' troops, and we learn that Rim is the son of one of the leaders of the Uno rebellion against his rule; it also turns out that Battros is

holding his mother prisoner in a stasis field, like a beautiful statue, one of his many treasures. Wanting to add the SOL BIANCA to his list of possessions and use it to further his dreams of galactic conquest, Battros offers the team a simple choice - the ship for their lives. When April refuses, he slashes her face with his sword and orders them locked up until their execution.

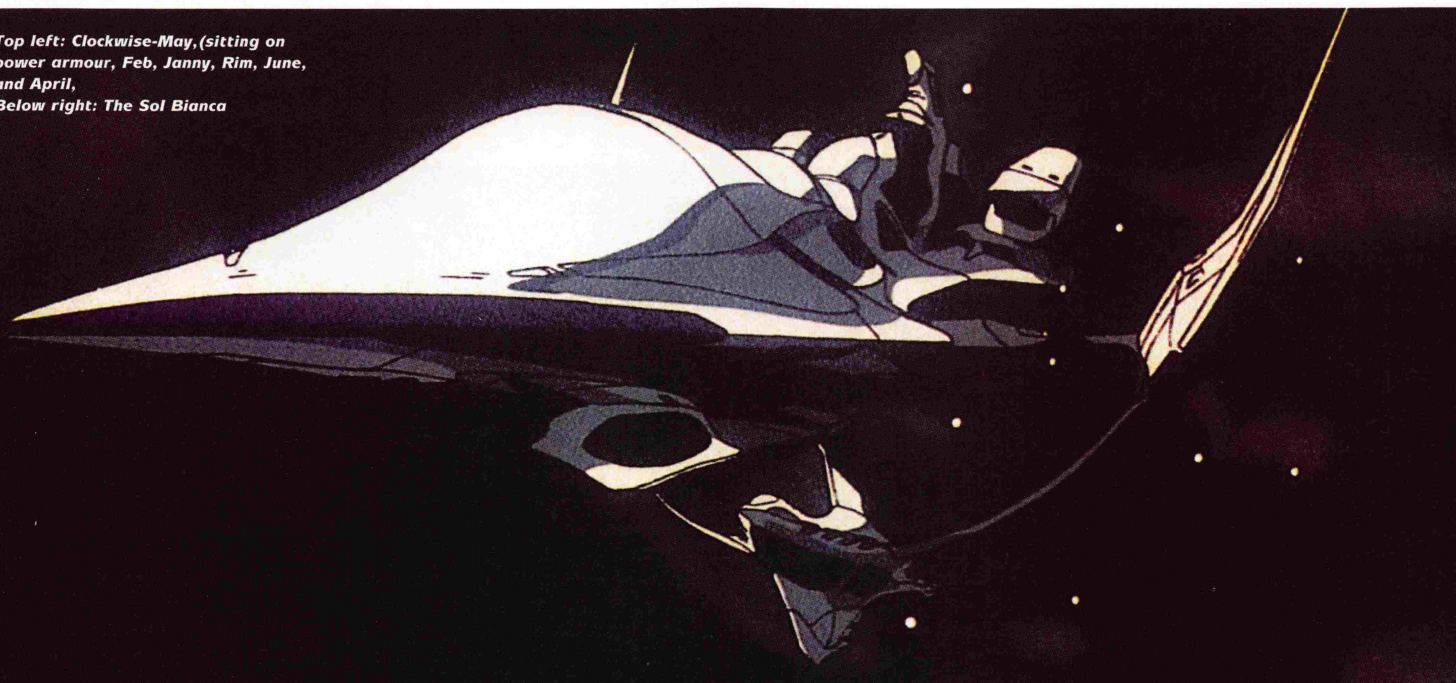
Feb and May are working frantically to repair the ship and come up with a rescue plan. Rim's father, meanwhile, has decided not to alter his plans for rebellion just because his son is in danger. A forthcoming eclipse will offer the perfect chance for an attack on Torres and it must go ahead. When the girls are taken out for execution, Feb and May come up with a rescue, but Rim is still in enemy hands; April decides to go back for him, and even though the others say no at first, they finally join her. It turns out that Battros' huge battle fortress is a spaceship, and big enough for the SOL BIANCA to jump inside and attack from within. While May rescues Rim and the others free the hostages and empty the treasury, April goes in search of Battros, bent on revenge.

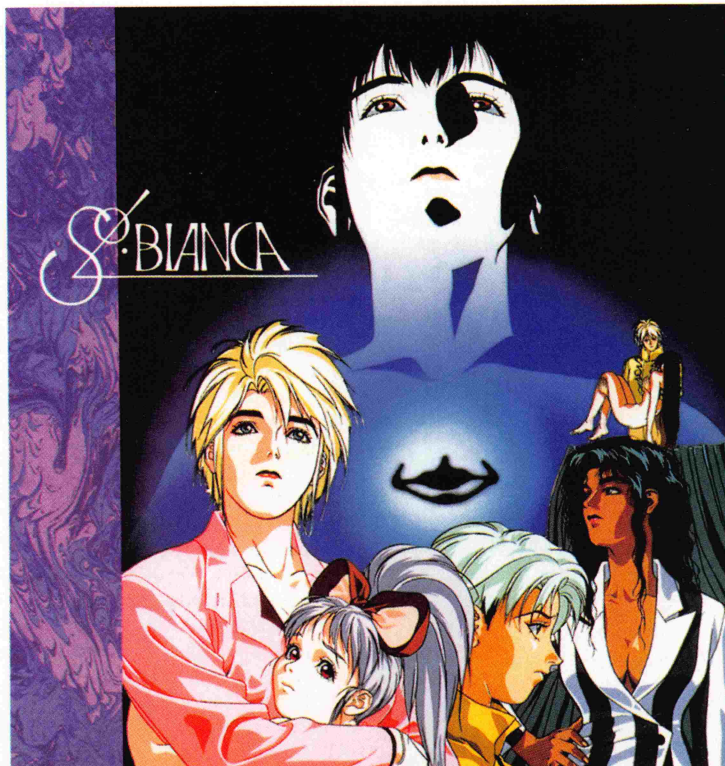
The OAV ends with Rim reunited with his parents, Uno freed and Battros' threat to the galaxy completely wiped out. The great treasure of the Gnosis, though, turns out to be not quite what the team expected of the legendary Golden Box. So ends the first story of the pirate ship SOL BIANCA and her crew.

OAV 2

The team attacks a cruise liner expecting easy pickings, but finds it more heavily defended than they

Top left: Clockwise-May, (sitting on power armour, Feb, Janny, Rim, June, and April, Below right: The Sol Bianca





Top: Artwork for Japanese release of *Sol Bianca 2*.
Above: The girls in action!
Left: Battros
Right: June linked to the *Sol Bianca*

had expected. The girls are in big trouble and the arrival of June and SOL BIANCA in the nick of time gets them out of a very dangerous situation. As they leave in a hurry, nasty space smuggler Gomez manages to hit the retreating SOL BIANCA with a trio of smart missiles; one of them gets under the hull and goes to work inside.

The missiles transform into large precursors of nanotech viruses, self-replicating robotic 'worms' that gradually infest the ship. Since June is symbiotically linked to the ship, the effects on her are devastating. Her condition worsens steadily until the others are forced to seek medical help for her. This not only forces them all to acknowledge that June is not at all human - hard to ignore when the evidence of medical scanners showing non-human organs is staring you in the face - but also brings them back into the clutches of the pursuing Gomez. He's mad as hell at the disruption they caused to his smuggling operation and he is thrilled at the opportunity or running into them again, especially when the pilot who got them out of trouble last time is now incapable of helping them again.

June is the last of her race - or is she? What destroyed them? What is the secret of SOL BIANCA's mysterious metal, pasha, with its unique properties? Will the team be able to get out of this one, and help June as she's helped them so often in the past? The second OAV leaves as many unanswered questions as it resolves. There are obviously many more stories of the SOL BIANCA and its crew to be told.

SISTER ACT

Sexism and *Sol Bianca*

With an all-new translation of *Sol Bianca* due out on these shores very shortly, the hype machine is calling it 'Plastic Little's Big Sister.' If by that we are supposed to infer that *Sol Bianca* is older, more sophisticated and considerably more

mature, then the adverts speak the truth. Unfortunately, many fans may be disappointed if they are expecting the gratuitous nudity of *Plastic Little*, which is mercifully absent. Sorry, boys.

Sol Bianca also has another unfortunate link with *Plastic Little*, which is that it's hardly plot-heavy. This is a particular shame because the characterisation in the anime is especially strong. It also exists in two separate versions: the 1990 translation prepared by AD Vision in the USA, and the 1995 version from Kiseki in the UK. And what a difference five years can make...

Some discrepancies between the US and UK scripts are merely quaint reminders of the nationality of the translators. The English script has the evil Emperor Battros speak with the 'Royal We' in a nod to the UK's monarchic past, and the US script avoids many of the ironies in the script in a nod to its multiethnic audience, some of whom may be new English-speakers struggling with the subtleties of language. But the most obvious difference between the British and American scripts is the amount of profanity. The US script is swimming in swearing and risqué wisecracks, with some truly lively dialogue as the girls throw insults at each other. In comparison, the UK script is a lot more pedestrian, with barely any bad language. On paper, the British script lacks the dynamism of the American version, but, as anyone ought to know by now, anime do not take place 'on paper'.

If we actually look at the scripts in context, as subtitles designed to complement the Japanese dialogue, a number of points become clear. The most obvious one is that the translations are both 'faithful' to the original. The problem many viewers might experience is finding the one which is most 'faithful' to them. The language in the US script is most definitely 'R-rated', but the inclusion of so many four letter words was



clearly not absolutely imperative. If such language were truly integral to the script, it would have been repeated in the Graphic Visions comic adaptation of the series, which remains surprisingly curse-free. The possible reasons for it all are buried in the practices of the American video business.

The most sinister is that it is a case of 'fifteening', whereby a video company artificially adds swear-words to a release in order to bump up its appeal to unsophisticated teenage viewers. A more sociological explanation would be a 'mild fifteening' in order to cater to audience expectations. Any translator faced with the same material would have to ask themselves if they shouldn't find an equivalent mode of speech in their own language to convey the same general effect. If a character speaks strange Japanese, give them a strange English accent. If a character speaks classical Japanese, make them speak Shakespearean English, and so on. *Sol Bianca* is a real 80s science fiction extravaganza, with rather butch protagonists and racy plotting. If it had been made in Hollywood as a James Cameron live-action film, it would have had plenty of bad language, and this is a reasonable argument for putting such language into the translated product.

The only problem with such a decision is that it might alter the original authors' intent. In *Sol Bianca*, the characters are strong, confident, mature women. Because so many swear-words in English are physical or sexual in nature, their use in the US translation alters the original script by adding a sexist dimension that was not previously present. For example, in one scene Janny, June and April are making their getaway on a stolen aircraft. But Janny's feet won't reach the pedals, so April makes June crouch down and operate them by hand. In the Japanese version, April reasons that June is the logical choice because she is so small, but in the US version it

becomes a sniping reference to having to 'squeeze between [Janny's] fat thighs.' This immediately feminises Janny and April beyond the wishes of the author. It turns the attention, however briefly, from the desperation of the chase to whether or not Janny has a weight problem, and this viewer's thoughts to dieting, fashion and double entendre.

It may sound like a minor quibble, but such dialogue is repeated throughout, with simple phrases such as 'Please hurry' ('Hayaku nasai') transformed into 'Move your pink butt.' These lines eventually undermine the original characters, which is a shame because one of *Sol Bianca*'s most interesting features is the non-sexist characterisation. Janny and April, like Ripley in the *Alien* films, could easily have been played by men; there is no mention of their gender in the text, and they are competent, heroic figures. So few films are prepared to break the mold of simpering females on the sidelines, but *Sol Bianca* reverses this stereotype completely, and even avoids the standard 'price' of indulging the audience with plenty of nude scenes. Instead, all the lead roles are female, and the few men that get involved in the action are all ineffectual, token characters.

Rim Delapaz is one of that rare breed, a token man. He arrives, gives the characters a McGuffin to strive for, and then hides in the background until the fighting is over. His father, Melanion, might appear to be a stronger character, but he doesn't even share the stage with the crew of the *Sol Bianca* until the final reel. Even then, his revolt would have failed without the pirates' assistance. And Battros becomes a quivering wreck when the vengeful April faces him alone. Take off his badge of rank, and he's just a snivelling wimp.

Compare this to the powerful characters of Janny and April, and you'll see that *Sol Bianca* does indeed break some new ground. There's

even a real post-feminist trail-blazer in the form of Feb, the leader of the gang. Whereas Janny Mann is so 'manly' as to even speak in male Japanese, Feb retains a form of stereotypical femininity. She is calm, contemplative, and, in keeping with the sexist formulae of SF, not much good with firearms or technology. Yet when push comes to shove, the all-female cast allow Feb's 'female' ideas to be heard on an equal footing with the kick-ass masculine pronouncements of Janny and April. More importantly, for all her long gowns and afternoon tipples, Feb remains quite demonstrably the leader of the crew. The only character designs who really maintain anything approaching a 'feminine' style are May and June, but even they have their own special qualities. May, let's not forget, is the ship's mechanic, and even pilots the mech unit. June may rather drippy in her constant moaning about potential risks, but her hysterical behaviour is not rooted in the SF female stereotype. June is so neurotic because she is inextricably linked to the consciousness of the *Sol Bianca* itself, and harm to the ship will also damage her. She may be female, but she is not human, which opens up a completely new can of worms for your thinking-man's anime fan.

This is what redeems *Sol Bianca* from the *Plastic Little* trap of stereotype and formula. It is a 'female' film through its exclusion

of men, in the same way that *Reservoir Dogs* is a 'male' film through its exclusion of women. In not having any males around to take the lead as tradition demands, *Sol Bianca* is able to make new demands of its characters. It is rather a shame that this originality was already fading by the time the sequel was made, and that the author's intent was compromised by the inclusion of some mild nudity in a patronising attempt to hold the viewers' interest. I don't know about you, but I'd rather nudity was there for some other reason than to cover up absence of plot. *Sol Bianca* is not a triumph of original storytelling, but it is undoubtedly enjoyable. Its real strength lies in the power of its characterisation. If you want beautifully-rendered, wobbling flesh tone, stick with *Plastic Little*, but if you want something thoughtful, look out for her big sister.



Helen would like to acknowledge her debt to work published by NewType magazine, Patricia A. Munson-Siter (Anime UK), and the BayCon and CapriCon anime programme books, as well as the female friends with whom she has had illuminating discussions on *SOL BIANCA* and women in science fiction.

CAST

JANNY MANN Minami Takayama
FEB FALL Yoko Matsuoka
APRIL BIKIRK Rei Sakuma
MAY JESSICA Mika Ito
JUNE ASHEL Yuriko Huchizaki

OAV 1

RIM DERAPAS Daisuke Namikawa
MELANION DELAPAS Tesho Genda
BATTROS Takeshi Aono

OAV 2

GOMEZ Daisuke Sato

CREW

DIRECTOR OAV 1 Katsuhito Akiyama
DIRECTOR OAV 2 Hiroki Hayashi
ORIGINAL CONCEPT Toru Miura
CHARA DESIGN/ANIMATION SUPERVISOR Naoyuki Onda
MECHA DESIGN Atsushi Takeuchi
ART DIRECTOR Shigemi Ikeda
MUSIC Toru Hirano
EXEC. PRODUCER Yasuo Hasegawa
ANIMATION PRODUCED BY A. I. C.



NEWTYPE - TENTH ANNIVERSARY INTERVIEW

As many of you probably know, the most famous Japanese anime magazine, NEWTYPE, has reached its 10th anniversary this year. Taking this opportunity, AFX succeeded in obtaining an exclusive interview with the people behind this terrific anime magazine, thanks to the hard work of our reporter **AKE SASAKI**.



Mr. HIROYUKI SHIGENOBU



Mr. TETSUYA ASAKURA

Newtype

THE MOVING PICTURES MAGAZINE

If you are a hardcore anime fan, you probably know the address of NEWTYPE (by decoding complex Japanese kanji) by now. But even if you do know it, you cannot reach the actual place. The address printed in the magazine is only for correspondence purposes, and used to evade the unnecessary constant visits of too-enthusiastic anime fans. The actual location of NEWTYPE, as a matter of fact, is near the Japanese Self Defence Force's base in Ichigaya, Tokyo, so that if some radical anime fan barges into NEWTYPE, the staff can report to JSDF immediately. That's my guess, anyway.

The big building in which NEWTYPE is housed is exclusively rented for the Kadokawa publishing company. It is made of brand-new, beautiful black marble. Despite the size and the newness of the building, there is no reception area, so I wandered around the ground floor for a while, trying to find a clue as to where to go, and afraid of being misunderstood as some weirdo or something if anyone glimpsed me through a security camera! Finally, I found a panel stating where the NEWTYPE editorial office was (obviously in Japanese!) Mr. Hiroyuki Shigenobu (HS), the chief editor, and Mr. Tetsuya Asakura (TA), the designer, were waiting for me, and told me interesting anecdotes about the magazine. (*My comments and explanations appear like this, in italics and in brackets.*)

THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

AFX I understand that you held the NEWTYPE 10th anniversary event in March. What was it like? What sort of things did you actually do?

HS According to staff at the Sony Building (where the event was held, in Ginza, in the centre of Tokyo) there were twice as many customers as usual during the event period. At the event, we set up a corner where you could watch your favourite anime on video and listen to anime CDs. We displayed various original anime cels, and recorded messages from voice actors on MD (mini disc - a disc type digital record-

ing format developed by Sony). Actually, it was partly a promotion for MD. They backed us financially for this event.

THE REASON WHY NEWTYPE WAS PUBLISHED

AFX Why did you decide to publish NEWTYPE despite the fact that there were several other anime magazines in the market at that time?

HS There used to be a notion that anime was basically for children, so the higher-ups (managing director class people) in publishing didn't care much about design and all that, because, at the end of the day, it's for kids. But come to think of it, anime is a medium in which you will enjoy the pictures. And even though they are beautiful pictures in themselves, if laid out badly, they look just terrible. Why don't we care more about the design and pay more attention to how it looks? That was the concept of the first chief editor of NEWTYPE, Mr. Sato.

TA Actually we were not particularly conscious of other competitors at that time; we just wanted to make a magazine which could convey things by visuals. As the subtitle on the cover, THE MOVING PICTURES MAGAZINE, shows, we wanted to contain all moving items, like video games, TV programmes, radio-controlled toy cars, not just anime, and to show them in a very eye-catching way, as if they were moving on the page, while minimising the text. To be honest, I am personally not that interested in anime itself, but the basic trick is the same as other magazines we design in terms of conveying things by visuals.

WHY WAS THE TITLE NEWTYPE CHOSEN?

AFX The magazine title, NEWTYPE, originally came from GUNDAM, didn't it? why did you choose this particular name?

HS The Newtype in GUNDAM is the name for the new type of children who were born and grew up on a colony in outer space. They said

that in outer space they only have 1/6th of the gravity that exists on Earth, so their brains are so active that they could even have telepathic abilities. Because of this, these children can manipulate giant robots as pilots. So NEWTYPE is, in a way, the magazine for this kind of children, I mean a new generation of children who are more advanced than adults. That was the concept. The first chief editor, Sato, explained this to Mr. Tomino (the author of GUNDAM) and was given permission to use this name for the new magazine. So in a way, we referred to GUNDAM for the magazine, conceptually and visually. And as you probably realise, in early days pictures from GUNDAM were on the cover quite often. That's simply because in those days, if you featured GUNDAM, fans just bought it. Because of this, a certain consensus was formed among fans that GUNDAM equalled NEWTYPE magazine.

AFX How old are the targeted readers?

HS !5 to 16 year old teenagers. But nowadays the old fans have grown up, so the average age of readers is now 18.

AFX How many copies do you publish?

HS 250,000 copies per issue.

HOW DO THEY MAKE UP THE PAGES OF NEWTYPE?

AFX You have beautiful illustrations in each issue. Do you just use the illustrations you are given by anime companies, or are they absolutely newly-drawn for the magazine?

TA Most colour pages are newly-drawn by the original animators. But sometimes we simply have to use the transparencies that we are given by anime companies because of the time factor, or simply because the original animators are not available.

HS Once upon a time, though, all the colour pages used to be 100% newly-drawn.



AFX How detailed are the instructions you give to the illustrators when you commission pages?

TA Quite detailed, like a specific layout, the poses of each character and so on. If you don't give detailed instructions, you can't make sure that each page will have a remarkable impact on the reader. But if the actual illustrators are good ones, who can create impressive compositions and all that by themselves, we simply explain the concept of the page and ask them "Please draw a fabulous page!"

AFX How long does it take to draw the finished pages?

TA After commissioning, it normally takes about one month for the artists to finish the pages. But the planning of the pages is decided a couple of months before actually ordering the work.

AFX How do you choose the illustrators?

HS Well, needless to say we ask popular ones, and good ones. We decide just on a hunch.

AFX In the UK, desk-top publishing is common amongst publishers and most magazine publishers now use computers. Is that the method you use here for NEWTYPE?

TA No. For illustration related materials we use computers these days, but for articles and captions we still use conventional printing methods. We are still analog, you see!

AFX How many people work for NEWTYPE?

HS The full-time editorial staff is 9, and we have many freelance writers and correspondents on top of this.

TA The design staff is 6. Actually we do other magazines as well, so in practice those 6 work for NEWTYPE for about one week per month. (Mr. Asakura's DESIGN CREST is an independent company. They not only work on NEWTYPE, but on other magazines and ads in general.) When we started 10 years ago, though, we were more or less just two. Our staff has gradually increased since then.

HOW DO YOU JOIN THE NEWTYPE STAFF?

AFX I'm just curious, but what sort of qualifications do you need to be a NEWTYPE editorial staff member?

HS I don't think you need any academic qualifications. Kadokawa happens not to ask for those kind of qualifications when you apply. You don't need to be an anime fan either. We value the quality of seeing things rather objectively, which

is, I think, necessary when you make magazines. For example, if you are a fan, the illustrations drawn by the original animators might be very important to you, and once you have got those original illustrations, you might not care much about the space around them on the page. But we need to surprise the general reader, too. So our staff have to be capable of creating eye-catching editorial strategies, ways of showing the pages, devising titles, making designs, and so on. What we look for in our staff is people who are capable of creating an interesting hook.

TA When we advertise for a designer's vacancy in anime magazines, sometimes ex-animators apply for the position. But in most cases we don't hire them, because they are not always capable of laying out the pictures neatly, yet in a very striking way. You need a certain visual creativity to do this job, whether it's for an anime magazine or not.

OVERSEAS FANS

AFX NEWTYPE is the best known Japanese anime magazine among overseas anime fans. (Surprisingly, they did not know that NEWTYPE won the Tezuka Award at AnimEast last year!) Do you have fan mail or other correspondence from overseas?

HS Yes, we have mail from overseas readers constantly, but most of them are making various enquiries, like wanting some new videos, anime books, and so on; unfortunately we cannot respond to those kinds of queries. The majority is

from oriental fans, people in Hong Kong, Chinese Americans, and so on. Actually, we've had offers to publish overseas editions of NEWTYPE from 5 publishers in two countries

AFX Which countries are they?

HS America and Korea. But unfortunately we can't publish overseas editions. The thing is that the anime titles we are dealing with on NEWTYPE are predominantly circulating only in Japan, and the anime companies are happy to allow us to use their titles when we publish in Japan because this promotes them. We just pay fees for newly-drawn illustrations. But in foreign countries, where only a small amount of titles are circulating as compared with Japan, the copyright holders might ask for a decent amount of royalties, and when you clear all copyrights of more than 100 titles, you might have to pay an awful lot of money to these original copyright holders! I don't think these foreign companies could afford it. Once, I asked an American friend how many hard-core anime fans there are in the U.S., and he said that there were around 20,000 people. We have more or less a million hard-core fans in Japan, you see. I don't think the time for overseas editions is ripe yet. If any publishers are interested in the idea, I think they should have their own Tokyo office and they should take care of copyright matters for every issue; and also they would have to take care of the whole translation of every issue, which is an awful lot of work in itself. On top of this, they would have to adjust the content to fit in with their own readers' knowledge

and interests. Considering these procedures and processes that they would have to go through, it seems to me that overseas editions of NEWTYPE are still a long way off at the moment!

WHAT'S COMING ON NEWTYPE?

AFX Do you have any particularly interesting features coming on NEWTYPE soon?

HS Yes, we are featuring a new TV anime series created by the same staff as FUSHIGI NO UMI NO NADIA (*Nadia of the Sea of Mystery*, aka *The Secret of Blue Water*). This TV series starts in October in Japan; the title is SHINSEIKI EVANGELION. (Many Western anime magazines are calling it *New Century Evangelion*.) Evangelion is the name of a robot which can only be synchronised with a 14 year old child.

AFX What do you mean by synchronised?

HS It's not exactly an operating robot in a traditional sense. This child's thoughts translate into the robot's movements, directly. In GUNDAM there used to be some weapons operated by the power of telekinesis; it's a similar concept. I think this series will appeal to overseas fans as well, so you can look forward to it.

Many thanks to Mr. Shigenobu and Mr. Asakura for their kindness.



JONATHAN CLEMENTS

JAPAN ROCKS

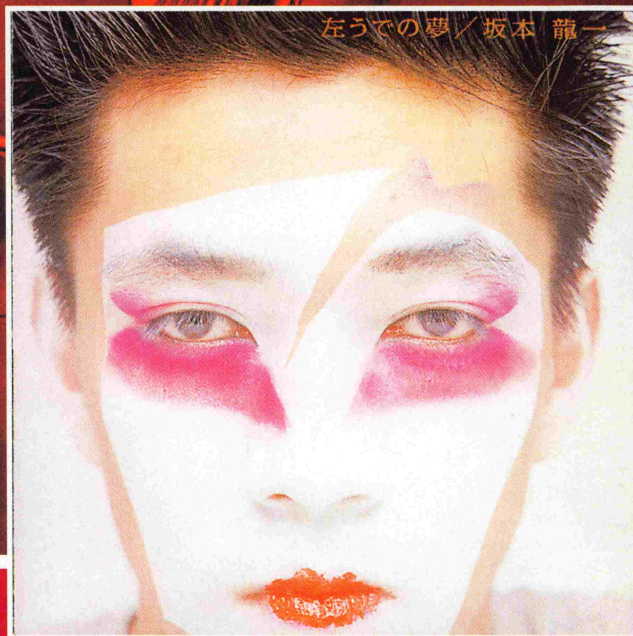
With Japan Rocks' continuing commitment to highlight Japanese music, it was inevitable that we would eventually get round to Ryuichi Sakamoto. After humble beginnings in one of the earliest techno bands, the Yellow Magic Orchestra, Ryuichi Sakamoto left to pursue a solo career, more as a composer than a musician. One of the few Japanese artists likely to be found in a Western record shop, he is known primarily for his film soundtracks. Whenever a director is after something a little bit 'foreign' or exotic, Sakamoto gets wheeled out, and he has produced some stunning work in his time.

Now, with the release on Midi records of a ten-volume set of Sakamoto releases, spanning the years 1981-1987, we finally get the chance to do a really BIG feature. At first sight, £137 might seem like a bargain for ten Japanese CDs. However, fans who are not keen on becoming Sakamoto completists might be better off seeking out the individual releases that are likely to appeal to them, because some repeat only mildly-differing versions of the same songs, sometimes several times. The Collection is not a Greatest Hits set, nor even a Selected Works, it contains literally everything that Sakamoto recorded in that seven-year period, including some that might be best left deleted.

Many AFX readers are likely to have

heard at least a few Sakamoto pieces in their time. **The Last Emperor** was too late for inclusion in the Collection, which is unfortunate because Sakamoto's collaborative efforts with David Byrne made for some excellent music. The most well-known work is **Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence**, the soundtrack from a landmark film in East-West coproductions. It united director Nagisa Oshima with an international cast of actors, with the two greatest performances in the film going to Tom Conti, speaking brilliant Japanese, and 'Beat' Takeshi Kitano as the Japanese sergeant that Conti tries to understand. Sakamoto himself played an obsessive Japanese officer, who wins a pyrrhic victory in his psychological war with David Bowie's haunted prisoner-of-war. At the time of the film's release, much was made of Sakamoto as the 'Japanese Bowie', although this appellation is somewhat undeserved. Although it is only speculation, it would seem that Bowie and Sakamoto did not get on well, since the *Forbidden Colours* duet on the album, a Bowie-single if ever there was one, was sung by Sakamoto and David Sylvian.

The rest of the music really made Sakamoto's name in the West. Its haunting, simple melodies and rhythms combine the traditional instruments of south-east Asia with a few synthesised sounds from the Yellow Magic Orchestra days.



LOVING THE ALIEN

RYUICHI SAKAMOTO

There's a particularly oriental feel in the portamento, where the notes slide into each other, taking up any intervening notes as they go. But **Mr Lawrence** is not a particularly good buy in this collection, because it's already available in the UK. The only difference between this and the UK edition is the cover. The English version has the poster from the film, featuring a prominent David Bowie. The Japanese version is dominated by a film still of Sakamoto himself, understandable when you remember that Bowie had nothing to do with the soundtrack.

There's a strange postscript to **Mr Lawrence** in the Collection, which is a little album called **Coda**, although it might be better to call this **Mr Lawrence: Unplugged!** It features Sakamoto on the piano, often completely unaccompanied, working through most of the songs on the **Mr Lawrence** soundtrack. The melodies that characterise much of Sakamoto's film work carry across very well, and this simplicity is

probably what caused the album to be made in the first place, since it was originally released with an accompanying booklet entitled **Ryuichi Sakamoto Avec Piano**, no doubt to allow aspiring pianists to imitate his style. Certain of the tracks, however, don't work. *Batavia*, for example, with its Javan instrumentals, doesn't really translate into a piano recital, but the overall tone is still successful. There are two rather incongruous tracks tacked on the end of the CD, most likely to fill it out into a more acceptable length, but even so the complete running time is only thirty-six minutes.

Another media foray for Sakamoto came in 1985 when he provided the **Esperanto** score for the choreographer Molissa Fenley. The product of two years of planning, all that now remains of this modern dance extravaganza is Sakamoto's album, for which he plundered some of his earlier work in synthesisers, and recruited the avant-garde percus-

sionist Yas-Kaz. Parts of the performance, such as the opening *Wongga Dance Song*, are extremely impressive, but the album soon degenerates into scattered spots of noise over static. It might have been a joy to watch, but it's certainly an acquired taste and most definitely not easy listening. It's also rather short again, weighing in at only 39 minutes.

Sakamoto seems to have had many opportunities to work with foreign artists. He is one of the few Japanese authors that anyone in the West is likely to have heard of, and his attracted his fair share of admirers. In 1981 he produced **Left-Hand Dream** in collaboration with Robin Scott. There is a distinctively 'Chinese' feel to the music, including flanged violins, hichiriki and other instruments whose use would come to fruition in Sakamoto's **Last Emperor** work. The opening *My Fragment*, along with *Tell 'Em to Me* and *Living in the Dark* all make good use of percussion, the latter with a barely audible remix of *Mr Lawrence* drifting subtly in the background. There's also a nice little 'robot' melody called *Rêlâché*, of which more anon... Another track, *The Garden of Poppies*, might have sounded futuristic in the early 80s, and naff as the decade progressed, but listening to it in 1995 I can begin to see why Sakamoto commands such respect from so many performers. *The Garden of Poppies* might be stumbling, it might even be a little amateurish by today's synth standards, but there it is for all to hear, an ambient dance track ten years ahead of its time. If you liked the alien qualities of Sakamoto's film music, then this album would be a good place to start looking at the rest.

Mention of alien qualities and films brings me inexorably to AFX's main interest in Sakamoto, the astounding score to **Wings of Honneamise**. Published in 1987, and thoroughly deserving of its place in the Collection, **Honneamise** features many of Sakamoto's hallmarks. There are many piano pieces, and more innovative uses of Asian percussion à la **Mr Lawrence**. Sakamoto's own 'alien' qualities make a wonderful complement to the exhaustive design behind this distant world. While the opening theme might bear a strange resemblance to *Mama* by Genesis, tracks like *Uproar* (#4) are quintessential Sakamoto, borrowing chords and moods from **Mr Lawrence** with impunity. *Useless* (#5) parodies the military with its pomp and circumstance, mixing a brass band with a playful marimba, before giving way to the alien percussion of before. Like the triangular spoons and strange-shaped telegraph poles in the anime visuals, Sakamoto's music is familiar, yet somehow out of place, and it fits perfectly with the

tone of the film. The literal unearthliness of **Honneamise** is highlighted in the way Sakamoto mixes widely-differing musical styles, from the organ and choir that form *Holy Lequinni* (#8), to the orchestra with banjo, electric guitars and Arabian theme that characterises *War* (#12). And it all ends with the **Mr Lawrence** feel of *Fade* (#15), a fit-

Sakamoto's long-time Japanese collaborator Akiko Yano, who provides the lyrics to *Steppin' into Asia*. Those who can't get enough of this rather average track have the opportunity to hear it in three other versions on other CDs in the Collection.

Two of the versions are on a **Singles**



ting return to Sakamoto's roots, and a wonderful album.

The remainder of the CDs in the Collection don't quite compare with the innovation of **Honneamise**. **Behind the Mask** is an interesting work, perhaps better described as Sakamoto's Tin Machine phase. The title track is, of course, by Michael Jackson and Chris Mosdell, but readers are advised to stick with the Eric Clapton version, because Sakamoto's drummer and guitarist seem to have had an argument about who was keeping time. Other artists covered include Iggy Pop and Thomas Dolby, as well as

CD, along with mixes of other Sakamoto songs, most of which can be found elsewhere. This CD, however, is notable because it contains a version of *Rêlâché*, with the addition of awful English lyrics. Sharp readers of the first Japan Rocks feature back in AUK 17 may remember it, since I ventured that it was the worst song ever written. The English title is *Just About Enough (And Then It's Party Time)*. This is perhaps the weakest in the whole Collection, since you would have to be a real fanatic to want to listen to all the remixed B-sides of singles that weren't too amazing to start with. Most annoying of all, there's a

sixteen-minute piece called *Exhibition*, listening to which is an experience not unlike having one's teeth drilled.

Media Bahn Live has, as you might expect, live versions of many of the songs that you will have already seen elsewhere in the Collection. Sakamoto also tries his hand at knocking out some Eric Satie classics on the piano, and, mercifully, the drummer and guitarist from the previous *Behind the Mask* recording have been replaced by musicians who can actually keep to the beat. Sakamoto finishes off the performance back on the solo piano with the rather sweet, baroque *Parolibre-Etude*. Despite my own aversion to live albums in general, **Media Bahn** works as a good sampler to Sakamoto's works, and some of the performances are better than the original album tracks.

With so many film soundtracks and foreign collaborations going on in the 1980s, it's a wonder Sakamoto had any time to record any new albums of his own. The only two 'real' albums in the Collection are **Future Guy** and **Music Picture Book**. **Future Guy**, packed with stark, fascistic artwork on the sleeve-notes and several Akiko Yano collaborations, is another mixed bag. It contains Sakamoto's first foray into Latino music with *Ballet Mecanique*, and clumsy but effective Blade Runner samples in *Broadway Boogie Woogie*. A lot of the tracks are more theatrical than musical, there are dissonant chords and incongruous operatic interludes by Caoli Cano. **Music Picture Book** is more of the same, with peaks of innovation such as the proto-ambient *Wings of the Forest*, dotted amongst what can only be described as elevator music. It would seem that much of Sakamoto's best work is born out of the clash of opposing cultures and artistic egos. When he is left to create in isolation, his undeniable talent becomes uncussed, too idiosyncratic, too alien for his own good...

The Ryuichi Sakamoto Collection Midi Records

1981	Left hand dream MDCZ-1215 (Recommended)
1983	Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence MDCZ-1220 (Recommended)
1984	Music Picture Book MDCZ-1216
1985	Esperanto MDCZ-1217
1986	Futurist Boy MDCZ-1218
1986	Media Bahn live MDCZ-1219
1987	Behind the Mask MDCZ-1223
1987	Wings of Honneamise MDCZ-1222 (Recommended)
1993	Coda MDCZ-1221
1993	Field Work... (SINGLES) MDCZ-1224

Available from Tower Records, Piccadilly.



ANIME & MANGA GROUND ZERO



**MASAAKI KATO of
Away Team AFX visits
COMIKET 48**
*the first ever three-
day Comiket,
18-20 August 1995 at
Harumi, Tokyo.*

The time has come! Let me take you on a little trip. If you can look down on Japan from the sky you'll be able to pick out a lot of lines bound for HARUMI during this event; if you belong to NASA, please observe the halls from the space station! The lines are composed of attendees, some of whom called this magnificent event 'NATSU-MATSURI'. (This means the summer festival.)

In fact, COMIKET is a festival for us.

Our hearts are so full of joy that it couldn't possibly rain! Do you understand the wonder of COMIKET? Dreams come true therefore, COMIKET is wonderland. This is COMIKET's law!

When the fans look at each other in those huge lines, they are impressed once again by the fact that although they have never met, it's as if they have been best friends since high school days, through ANIME. If you want to be here, you had better get up early; then just follow the crowd composed of boys and girls carrying cardboard boxes at 6.00 a.m. You won't get lost! Today the police have requested more security. I can't believe such a story; however, it is true. Nowadays there are a lot of factors which threaten our security, for example the Tokyo gas attack; Japan is not safe. If anyone

1. The Venue
2. Kamen (Masked) Rider 1
3. Donald Curtis and Marco Pagott (Porco Rosso)
4. We couldn't identify this gentleman, but what a great costume & what a fabulous performance!
5. Jean and Nadia (Secret of Blue Water)
6. Tokyo Babylon
7. Kei and Yuri (The Dirty Pair)
8. Joe Higashi and Terry Bogard (Fatal Fury)
9. Mazinger Z and Combattler V
10. Tenchi Muyo Group
11. Fatal Fury Group
12. Space Battleship Yamato



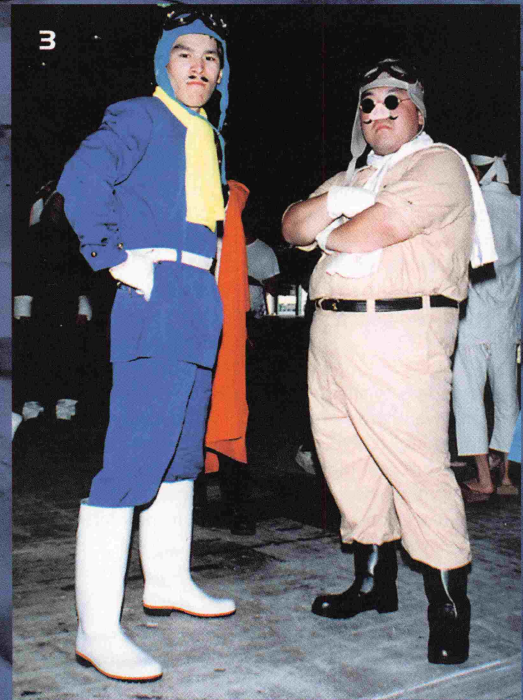
scattered gas or some other substance at Harumi, 300,000 or more attendees would be sacrificed, so COMIKET's preparation and organisation was very thorough.

Say, COMIKET is one of the greatest festivals in in the ANIME and MANGA world as we know it. When the season for COMIKET comes, the fans are really psyched up to go there every time. "I do not care if a big typhoon is on the way, I want to go to the HOLY PLACE! We're all set!" they say. Their parents worry about them, the weather is terrible, it is so hot, but they go there just the same. It's the local hangout for fans!

Here and there fans are talking about their favourite anime and manga. They like to discuss their favourite character and the 'back-



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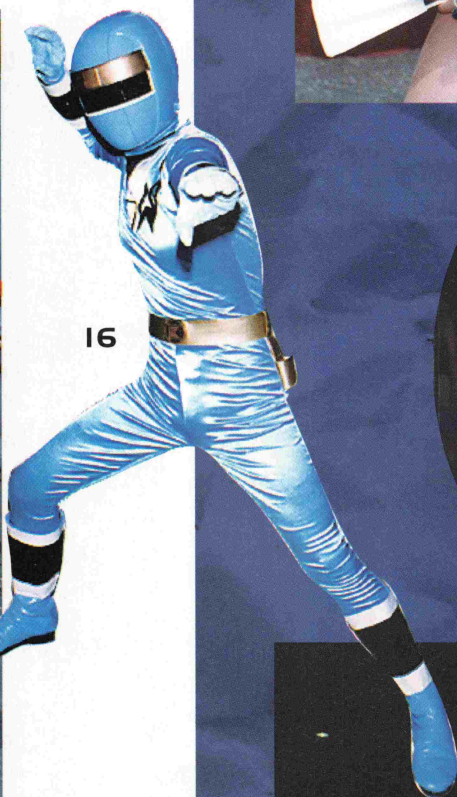
stage stories'. Do you know AMI MIZUNO, or SAILOR MERCURY? No, she's not A.M.I. of the BIOS personal computer! She's one of the most popular characters in the anime world. Ten years ago, Kyoko Otonashi, the landlady from MAISON IKKOKU by Rumiko Takahashi, was one of the fans' ideal women. Today, that position has been taken by Ami. And WEDDING PEACH characters are popular too. If you understand this feeling completely, I give you the title 'OTAKU'!

Some of us attendees wish we were morning people; we always feel sleepy in the morning! It's very hard. The dealers are real night-owls. Most of them are awake all night drawing illustrations for their fanzines. On the other hand, most of the attendees are filled with a zest for life and travel the halls

searching for their favourite fanzine! And on the final day, one hall was devoted to lending fanzines.

The enthusiasm of costume players has increased every year. They are COMIKET's latest stars. According to data from a few years back, over 5,000 costume players registered at COMIKET. I think this data is only the tip of the iceberg, because most of those live in the Kanto area, in Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba and Saitama prefectures; I guess the costume-player population is over 10,000 in Japan. And it's increased in popularity very quickly; arcade-game characters are especially on the increase. In some ways, its population explosion is a serious problem in the market today.

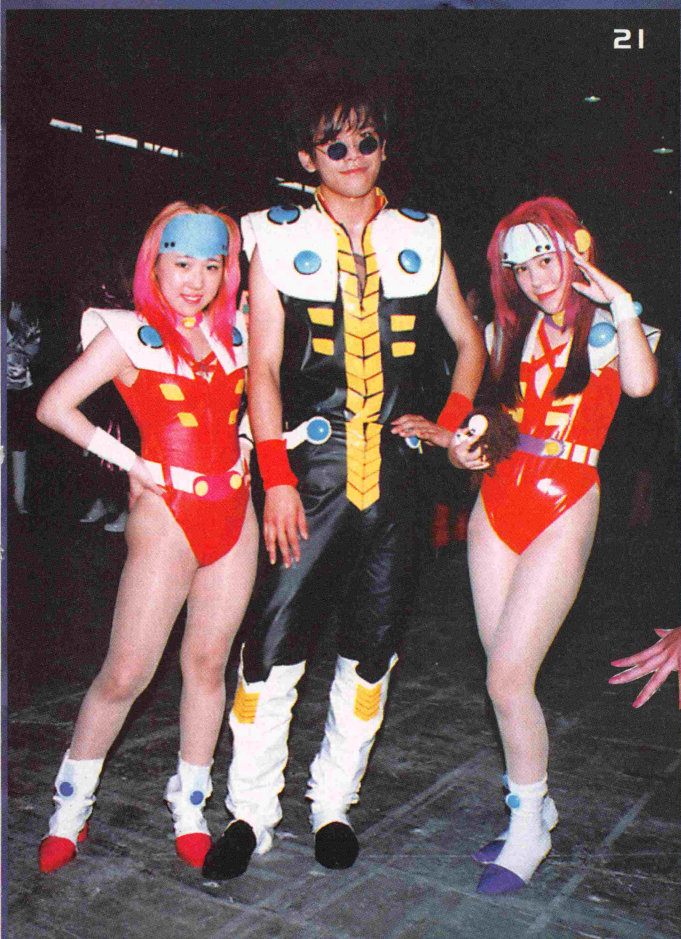
Some of them start making their costume in the Golden Week holiday





14

13. Mai Shiranui (Fatal Fury) 14. Wedding Peach Group 15. Devil Hunter Yohko II 16. Ninja Sentai Kakuranger 17. Yu Yu Hakusho 18. Wedding Peach Group 19. So Ryuden - the game version of Legend of the four Kings 20. Mai again - but from King of the Fighters '95, not Fatal Fury - and Athena Asamiya from the same game. 21. Basara and Mirenu x two (Macross 7) 22. Non of our gaming sources could identify this beautiful lady, but we had to include her anyway! 23. Unknown but excellent!



21

in late April and early May. It's difficult for us Japanese to get long holidays and this period is very important for us. But because many of them are so busy, most costume players make their costume during the last week (or last night!) before COMIKET. They take great pleasure in their work, and make the accessories, gadgets and so on, often using junk or 'rinkydink' (throw-away) items because they are cheap, and if they make a mess of it, the loss is small. Most costume players make their costumes at minimum expense, but if they make new and valuable developments they want to keep the knowledge to themselves! That's part of the fun.

They make new works, one after the other. Where do they get the designs? How do they acquire their 'feel' for it? It's easy for them. They

can get information earlier than you, that's all - from anime magazine illustrations, comics, film comics, OAVs, handbills, anime goods, and so on. In other words, these are their primary research material. Background scenes and minor characters are especially important and playing these 'loop-hole' characters is one way to stand out. The data for these characters isn't complete and all the details of their costume aren't obvious, so the costumers make original designs for those parts they can't understand. Naturally they have a great attachment to their designs and characters!

Let me show you some of the wonderful costumes at Harumi this summer



18



23

22



All pictures are © the costumers and Masaaki Kato and may not be reproduced without permission. ANIME FX would like to thank the cosplay and dojinshi workers of Japan for their continued help and kindness. Thanks to Will Overton; identifier of Obscure games!

Ake Sasaki interviews Mr. SUSUMU YOSHIKAWA, the producer of the original *sentai* series on which *THE MIGHTY MORPHIN' POWER RANGERS* was originally based. He created the *sentai* series and was in charge of the shows from *GORANGER* (1975) to *GOGGLE-V* (1982), the early *sentai* series which defined the form of the genre to this day. The interview took place at Toei Company in Tokyo, one of Japan's major movie studios, in May 1995.

(NOTE : Because many older TV shows and matters which may be unfamiliar to Western readers were discussed, Ake has added some explanatory notes in brackets wherever needed.)

How Japanese *sentai* shows turned into *THE POWER RANGERS*

AFX : Mr. Yoshikawa, I am really curious to know how this typical Japanese show turned into the most popular childrens' TV show in the world right now, the *POWER RANGERS*. How did it happen?

SY : It goes back more than 10 years. In 1981, Toei International in L.A. tried to produce the American version of *TAIYO SENTAI SUNVULCAN* (Solar Task Force SunVulcan, the 5th *sentai* series), because it was thought that the series seemed quite popular in the U.S. (Some of the *sentai* series were shown on local UHF channels in the US, and at the same time there was a certain popularity among fandom, which might have contributed to this idea.) There was even a suggestion that I might go to the States and supervise the whole project. But the whole idea unfortunately faded away because they couldn't sell the show to the U.S. TV stations.

In 1987, Mr. Haim Saban of Saban Entertainment approached us, saying he wanted to produce a US version of *CHOJINKI METALDER* (Ultra Humanoid Machine Metalder, Toei's action-packed kids' robot TV show, later turned into the US version known as *VR TROOPERS*). But despite his effort, later the project faded away again.

In 1992, Mr. Saban approached us again, saying that he wanted to make the US version of *KYORYU SENTAI ZYURANGER* (Dinosaur Task Force Zyuranger). We thought that it was a good thing if it happened, but on the other hand we thought it might be just another failed attempt, because it was the third time for us. But more than ten years' worth of effort was finally rewarded. As a matter of fact, it was a team effort by our vice president Yoshinori Watanabe (who is the real driving force behind the Toei kiddie action shows, a powerhouse of energy), Toei International



SUSUMU YOSHIKAWA

THE MAN BEHIND THE SENTAI SERIES



and Mr. Saban; and I am certain it was really thanks to Mr. Saban's passion for our show and his willpower. I guess he was pitching around from station to station in the US by himself, and I can imagine he might have spent an awful lot of money on his efforts. I really admire his enthusiasm.

As you know, in the end the show was on the air from September 1993 on Fox TV, a network of 135 stations. This was the birth of *THE MIGHTY MORPHIN' POWER RANGERS*, and now the show is being broadcast in more than 30 countries all over the world. To be honest, none of us would have dreamed of this scale of success. Even Mr. Saban didn't, initially.

AFX : Why do you think the show was not sold initially?

SY : The main obstacle was the actors. The idea that all the characters are played by Japanese can alienate the American audience, which is really understandable. So when Saban made the U.S. version, they replaced the Japanese actors with American actors.

AFX : Whose idea was that?

SY : Mr. Saban's idea. The casting of the *POWER RANGERS* reflected the multi-racial society in the U.S., which was good.

The further Toei/Saban live action series

AFX : Do you have any further plans for co-productions with Saban?

SY : As you know, *VR TROOPERS* has already aired from September 1994 in syndication in the U.S. (As most of you should know by now, this show is edited from Toei's *CHOJINKI METALDER* and *JIKU SENSHI SPIELVAN*, or *Warrior in Time and Space Spielvan*). And from this autumn, September 1995, there'll be a new series, *THE MASKED RIDER*, based on our show *KAMEN RIDER BLACK RX*. (This was the 10th series of Japan's most famous kiddie action show ever, *KAMEN RIDER*. The *BLACK RX* series originally aired in 1988 in Japan.)

We went to America last February to discuss what kind of show it will be, and we took Shotaro Ishinomori (a famous Japanese sci-fi manga artist, who created the original character and concept of the *KAMEN RIDER* shows) with us to the meeting with the Saban team so that we could consult him and get his input. We also talked over how Toei could offer help in terms of actual production and how Bandai, the major Japanese toy company which works closely with Toei on projects including the *sentai* shows, could be involved this time.

And of course, the *POWER*

RANGERS feature film opens on 30th June in the U.S. It's going to be a 6 billion yen mega budget movie. Initially the budget was around 2-3 billion yen, but the people in Hollywood said that if the movie was guaranteed to be a hit more money would be invested. First it increased to 4 billion, and now 6 billion.

However, we haven't decided yet whether we are going to release this feature in Japan or not. That's because there are some cultural differences, and because Japanese children might not always have the same tastes. (Note : the POWER RANGERS TV series itself has not been shown in Japan, so even the name of the show is completely unknown amongst Japanese kids.) So we'll see the preview of this feature and then we'll decide. And the same goes for other Asian countries, since Toei has the distribution rights in Japan and other Asian countries.

SFXpress

Mr. Yoshikawa's Background

SY : As you know, 19 *sentai* series have been made since 1975, so I've been involved in this show for 21 years. But my first production in this field was actually KIKAIER (another Ishinomori robot action show) 24 years ago. Since then I've been doing this kind of job (laughing). Toei has a long history even before KIKAIER in this field, like CAPTAIN ULTRA (a Japanese TV space opera, something like Captain Future), AKAKAGE (Red Shadow - the English title is Ninjascope : The Magic World of Ninjas, an action-packed, hilarious, hitech ninja show), GE GE GE NO KITARO (a monster show based on Japanese folklore), and, needless to say, KAMEN RIDER as well. That was supervised by my immediate boss Mr. Watanabe (currently Toei's vice president) and Mr. Hirayama (one of the most prominent Toei producers, the driving force behind the studio's early 'men-in-monster-suits' action shows. At that time I was doing adult TV action dramas, including more conventional samurai dramas, modern action dramas like THE BODYGUARD starring Sonny Chiba (Quentin Tarantino's favourite kung-



fu star - you can see him in TRUE ROMANCE!). But, you see, when it comes to Japanese TV shows, the show's sponsors (major advertisers) have a huge power over the content. For instance, they can say "Oh, Sonny Chiba should not smack these politicians", or "Oh, you cannot blow up our manufacturer's cars in the story", and that sort of thing. Adult hero series on TV are so restricted, more so than you think. So I was frustrated. At this point, my boss, Mr. Watanabe, asked me to produce a children's show, so I

took the assignment. Interestingly you can do much purer action adventures in a kids' show, more interesting and much faster-paced action-adventure. You definitely have more freedom and you can do it very boldly. In a children's show, evil is evil and justice is justice, just that; so you can concentrate on the detailed entertaining ideas. In that sense, I think I am working in the mainstream tradition of Toei action adventure, which is inherited from the good old days of the company's samurai entertainment features.



The Working Relationship With Saban

AFX : How do you work with Saban Entertainment?

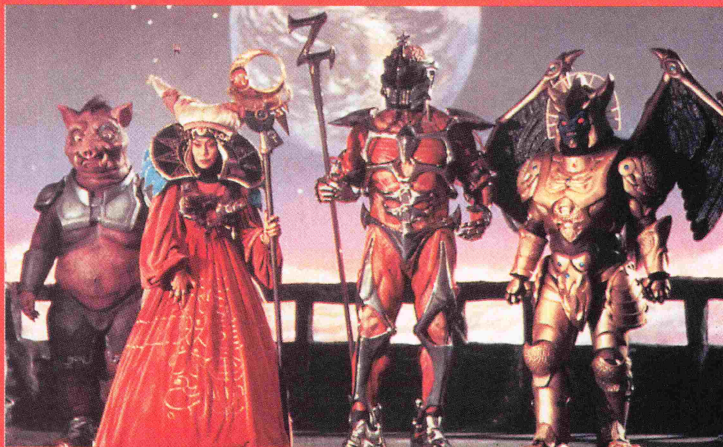
SY : Basically, Toei has the original work's copyright and has the right to consult on the actual plans and production of the Saban Entertainment version, because we have our own policy concerning the content. So you cannot mess up the content or just take liberties - in other words, the U.S. versions are being made in the spirit of not invading the original work's essence. As for VR TROOPERS, reportedly they even mimicked (or, you might say, respected) the original order of shots, exactly the same way in some scenes. When it comes to THE POWERS RANGERS, we shot some of the additional fighting footage and FX footage for them here in Japan. Also, we provide the monster suits. The Toei team is really good at that, so our crew make them, and sometimes supervise how they



KAMEN RIDER BLACK RX

such and such an episode, which I don't remember exactly.

As far as I understand it, he used to be a music producer in Paris, and he won two gold discs there. He had a huge hit with MAZINGER-Z records (featuring music from Toei's robot TV animation) and then he used that money to move on to Hollywood. I truly recommend you cover him as well. He's really quite a guy. Definitely not one of those run-of-the-mill people!



Rita, Lord Zedd and friends in the Power Rangers Movie.

do it. In any way we can, we back them up 100% to make their show work.

What kind of man is Haim Saban?

SY : Well, for me, to make a piece of work, whatever it is, you need to be crazy. That's the reason why I like Saban. I'm doing things in a crazy way here in Japan, and Saban is also Mr. Crazy in America, I think. It might be that he's Jewish; his enthusiasm and vitality are just beyond imagination. He's been trying to make this thing happen for more than ten years, you see? I really admire his energy. He also watches these kinds of TV programmes with much more attention to detail than I do. He sometimes explains to me that this thing happened and that thing happened in

How Bandai is Involved in the Project

AFX : How do you design characters in the show? Are you heavily concerned about merchandising toys from the early stages of each project?

SY : In the early days, like when we did GORANGER for instance, Mr. Ishinomori and Toei discussed it together and decided which designs were the final ones. Popy, the toy company which used to be a subsidiary of Bandai and specialized in merchandising toys, became one of our show's sponsors, roughly just before KAMEN RIDER started (1971). Then gradually our working relationship grew. (Initially Popy was only one of the show's advertisers, then gradually they started suggesting some alterations in the design of characters and gadgets in

the show.) Popy was acquired by Bandai as its most profitable main section, and in recent years they started initiating their own ideas, saying things like "We are thinking of launching such and such a type of robot, couldn't you put that into the show?" In this way, after more than twenty years of experience, Bandai and Toei have built up a strong business partnership, so now their role in the show is quite vital to its success.

SPIDERMAN Japanese Style

SY : Once we bought the licence from Marvel Comics and made THE SPIDERMAN for Japanese TV. (This happened after the rating for the second *sentai* series JACKER DENGKEI-TAI didn't go that well.) We were thinking about how to make the show and so on and so forth. Then my boss Watanabe suddenly came to us and said "Put a Transformer-robot in THE SPIDERMAN". We were baffled. I said "You mean put a big robot in THE SPIDERMAN show?" and he said "That's right." I felt it was a strange combination; but, come to think of it, the character has to have a punch, you know, and you have to think about the possibilities of merchandising. So we made up a new background for Spiderman in order to have this big robot in the story.

The story goes something like this. One day a flying saucer crash landed on Earth, in fact on some Japanese mountain top. An alien from the ship asked a kind young Japanese man to avenge him and defeat the baddies he had been chasing; and the alien gave the young man the ability to become Spiderman, and the flying saucer, which was transformed into a big robot.

Later Stan Lee, the creator of the original Spiderman, commented to us "This is different, but it's quite interesting in its own way". And he mentioned that when he previewed our version to his staff, they were very impressed with the idea. Of course he suggested his own different opinions to us, but at the same time he appreciated a lot of the good things in our show. I always think that the name of the game is, in the end, how can you make a hit show? So, as Stan Lee allowed us to make our own version, we co-operate with Saban to make their show successful in America. I know there are some nitpickers around. But again, I firmly believe that the show must be made in such a way that the majority will appreciate it; and yet I never intend to compromise the dignity and the esprit of the show by doing that. It is intolerable for me to make a piece in a very easy-going manner.

DINOZORD Power!



Toei Is Heading Overseas

AFX : Do you have any particular tactics concerning the future expansion of business overseas?

SY : As I mentioned, we now have three TV shows in partnership with Saban, and the Fox POWER RANGERS feature is coming in the summer. Our relationships with our foreign counterparts are really important to us and we value them highly. Also in the future, we would really like to make features which we can export to foreign countries directly, with Toei as the key production group. We have already produced more than twenty features in recent years starring American actors like Brooke Shields. The live-action version of FIST OF THE NORTH STAR is one of them. But our dream for the future is to make features using POWER RANGERS or VR TROOPERS -type sci-fi characters alone, and if possible to show them widely in the U.S. The thing is that when you use these characters alone, you don't have to worry about the actors any more. HAKAIDER, which we released in Japan recently (a cool mecha villain feature, a spin-off from Ishinomori's robot show KIKAIER), is the first attempt in that direction. While continuing to develop relationships with foreign counterparts, we would like to work towards that goal in the near future.

I think we know now where the goldmine is, but we still have to find the way to get to it!

ANIME FX would like to thank Mr. Yoshikawa very much for his kind co-operation and help with picture material. Thanks also go to Linda Broughton of DSA, for the Power Ranger Movie pics and Carol at GMTV, for the VR Troopers pictures.



Above: Zyuranger Below: VR Troopers



2029 AD

GHOST IN THE SHELL

PETER EVANS
of
Sakura
Studio
reviews
the movie



On Thursday, September 21, there was a Press showing of KOUKAKU KIDOUTAI at Imagica, deepest Gotanda. Two days before the World Premiere at the Tokyo Fantastic Film Festival, I had the good fortune to be neck deep in invitations, but without anyone cute to take along! So, it seemed, were 200 other people! In the end, I met a friend and we talked about the magazine he writes for while waiting.

Imagica has at least two and a half cinemas in the building. They are a post production company that seems to be *the* choice for anime. The larger cinema seats approximately 150 guests in sybaritic luxury.

On this particular occasion it was so full that people had to stand all along the back wall. There were even a remarkable number of gaijin present (i.e. more than 1). After a brief announcement, the lights went out and the film started.

Previous films of Shirow's work have all had their enjoyable parts, but none have really done justice to the depth and intelligence of his storytelling. DOMINION (first series) caught the slapstick elements of the original, but skipped the political subtext. BLACK MAGIC M-66 did not seem to bear any relation to the manga of the same name. APPLESEED was bound to be a disappointment as they tried to

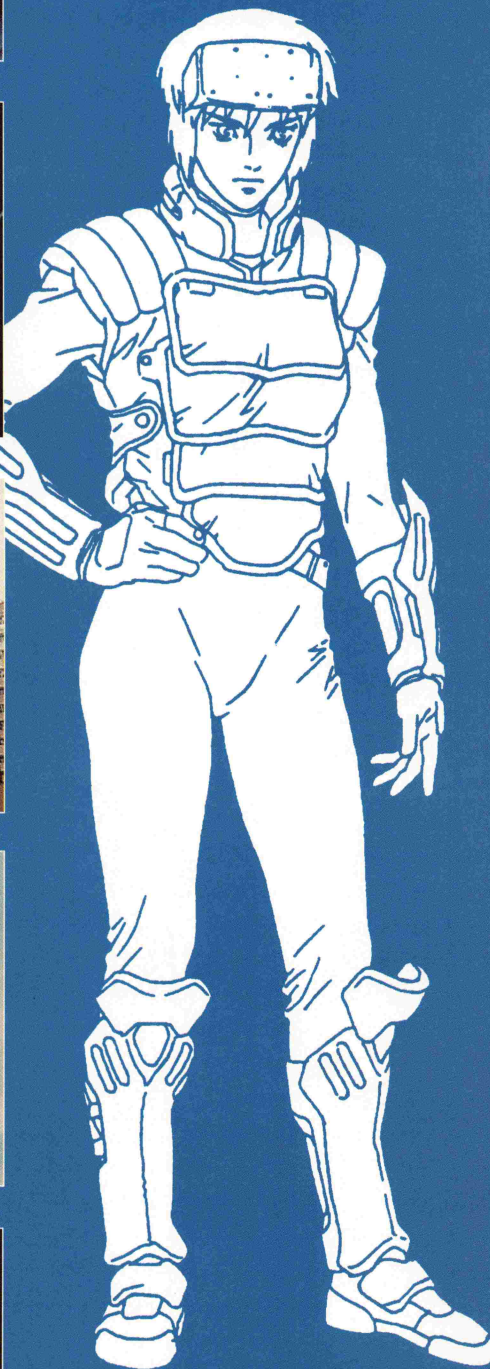
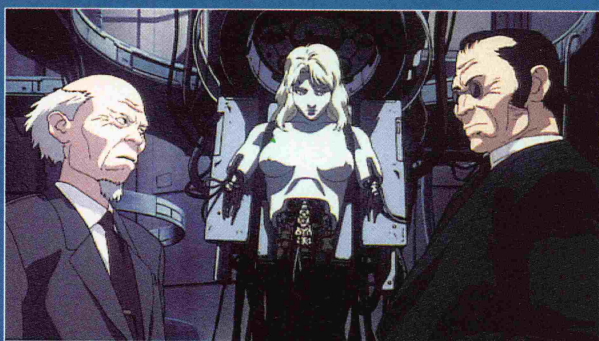
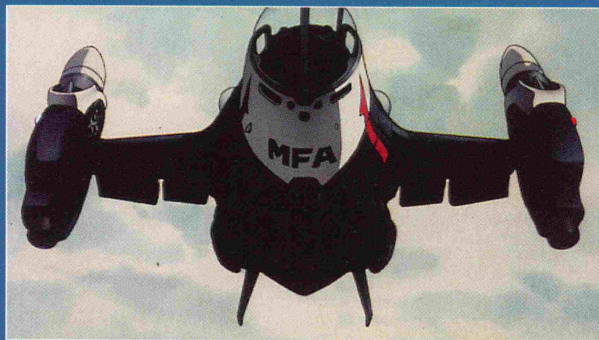
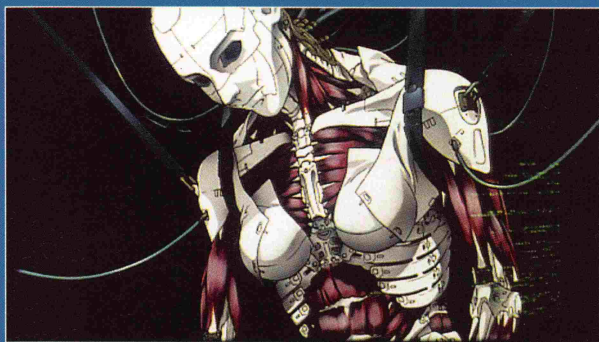
squish a huge futuristic action/political machinations manga into less than an hour. NEW DOMINION (second 6-part series) tried a lot harder than its predecessors, successfully incorporating the sub-story. But in the end, it did not seem to tie up the loose ends.

GHOST IN THE SHELL, however, is faithfully taken from the manga. Admittedly, perfectionists will complain that the frills and nonsense have been left out, but that's what perfectionists are for. Gone are the side-stories and comical moments that would ruin the dark tension. Replacing them are Motoko and Batou talking on a boat. Trying to define what it is that makes one sentient.

***"Who are you?
Who slips into
my robot body
and whispers
to my ghost?"***







pointed in this movie. These are plenty of scenes to whet the appetite for mayhem, such as a man taking out an armoured truck with a hand-gun and the invisible fight. I'm not allowed to mention the tank at the end, so I won't. The mecha designers' list at the end reads like a hall of fame! (Someone called Shoji Kawamori ...)

The director, Mamoru Oshii, has done a fantastic job here, compared to the 'head-movie' PATLABOR 2 with its sparse action sequences. GHOST IN THE SHELL has its special challenges. Such as the flawless mixing of computer graphics and cel animation. The trick-play scenes and the futurist war toys. Yet this is also a 'head-movie' in that a substantial part of the action takes place out of the physical domain.

Once again Oshii is working with the same composer, Kenji Kawai; the music for this movie is very different from that of their previous work, being etherial and brooding. The CD comes out in mid-November, as does the Anime-Comic (a.k.a. The Book Of The Film).

The innovative work on the voice processing and sound mixing works brilliantly. (Note: I have not seen the English dialogue version, nor am I likely to, so I don't know how well this version works.) None of the voice actors in this movie are regular 'anime' seiyuu, they are all movie-grade people. Akio Otsuka and Koichi Yamadera just happen to do anime as well. The most difficult job must have been lemasa Kayumi's Puppet Master, a life-form without a real body, yet one that is not less real despite this.

After the preview showing, many people asked me "What was the animation quality like?" As if animation quality alone defines the film. "Is it better than SILENT MOBIUS?" (Strangely, no-one asked if it was better than AKIRA.) Of course it was. The (rumoured) 400,000,000 yen spell "quality so real you can feel it". There were times when it really didn't feel like animation at all!

"Was it what you expected?"

No. It was better.

But don't take my word for it. Go and see it yourself. The bigger the screen the better!

Oh, I *hate* it when something this good comes along!

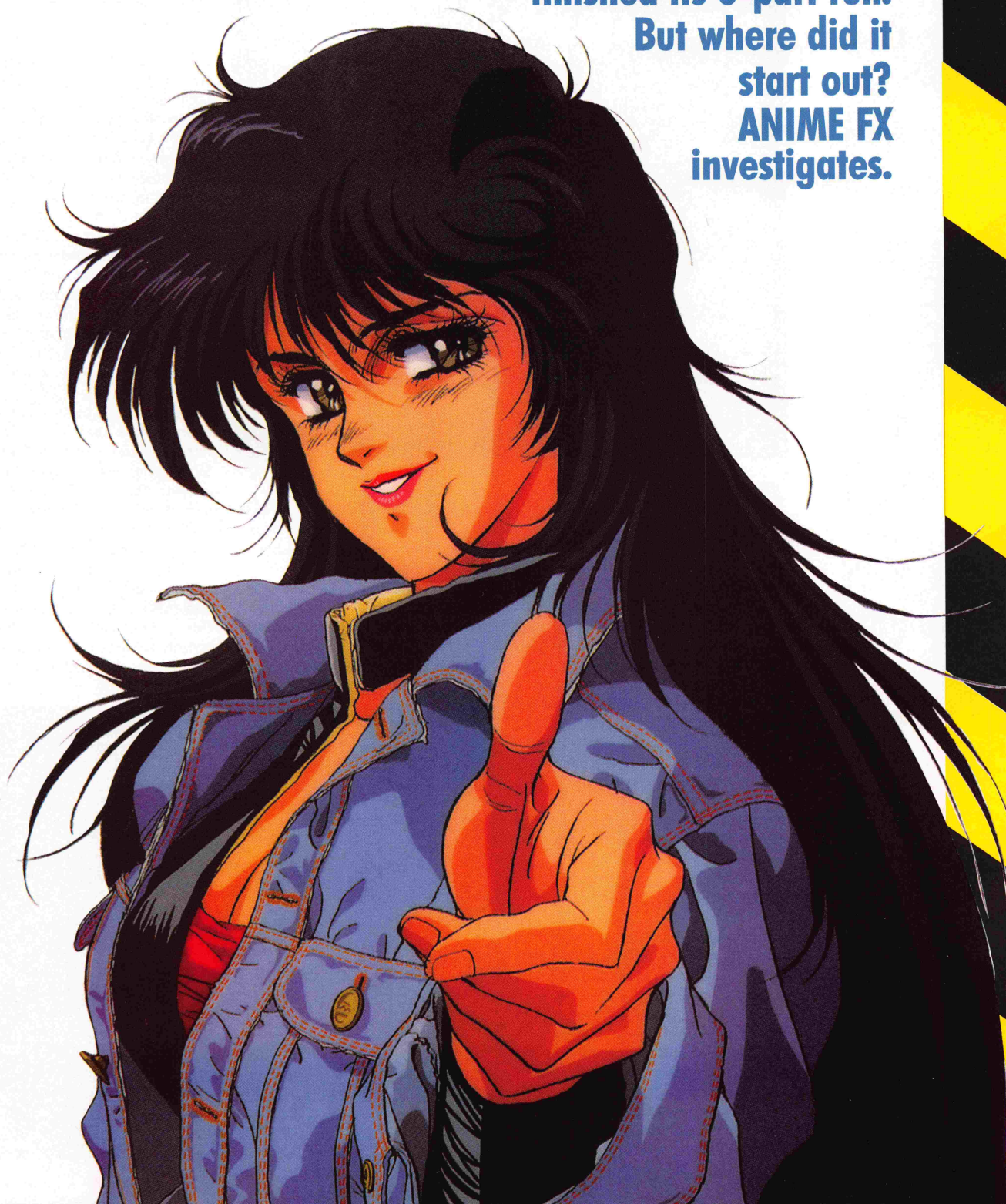
GHOST IN THE SHELL



エンジェル・コップ

ANGEL COP

Prettier than ROBOCOP,
bloodier than LETHAL
WEAPON, Manga's
budget OAV series has
finished its 6-part run.
But where did it
start out?
ANIME FX
investigates.



ANGEL



GENKI started life in 1988 as a supplement to NEWTYPE, the popular anime and TV magazine. Its role was to print manga, and with anime-related titles like MACROSS, ZEORYMER, UTSUNOMIKO and CYBER FORMULA, it was such a success that it soon moved over to independent status as a manga periodical in its own right. One of its original titles was ANGEL COP, a manga by Taku Kitazaki which commenced printing in August 1988. It too would make the leap to independent status almost a year later. Production company Soeishinsha, most famous in the West for CREAM LEMON, the erotic OAV series they co-produced with Fairy Dust, released the first ANGEL COP OAV in July 1989.

In the manga, Angel is the code-name for a young woman with a terrible past and a bleak future. Having seen her drug-crazed father murder her mother and little brother, she's become cynical and hard; her one passion is a fanatical hatred of all crime and a drive to stamp it out. She joins a special anti-terrorist group, and during a run-in with the mysterious Lucifer, a criminal with psychic powers, she is horribly muti-

lated and close to death. In order to save her, the doctors and her bosses have no choice but to turn her into a machine; her face is the same, but the brain inside her new skull is a computer, and her body, encased in a new black armoured skin, is a machine with huge killpower and almost unstoppable.

She's now the ultimate fighting machine, but her sole purpose in life - to stamp out crime - hasn't changed.

For the anime version, the characters gained a more realistic look. They were designed by Nobuteru Yuuki, and Noboru Aikawa's screenplay was directed by Ichiro Sakana. At first the tape was released into the rental market only, but Japan Home Video launched it onto the retail market in September 1989. Three episodes, *Tokkoshu Koan* (Special Public Safety Unit), *Henbou Toshi* (Changing City) and *Massatsu Shirei* (Order For Destruction), were released over the following three months, but it was not until 1992 that the final three episodes were released as SHIN ANGEL COP (*New Angel Cop*).

The series starts at the end of the twentieth century, in a world where Japan's economic power has made it the leading industrial nation and given it great influence over the economic and political stability of the whole world. A group of international terrorists known as 'Red May' is out to destabilise this super-power, in order to profit from the confusion and disorder that will follow. They are opposed by a special security unit of licensed-to-kill agents with no names, ranks or records, of which Angel is a member. The unit's head, Taki, has one of his best men, Raiden, investigating a terrorist attack on the US Embassy, and another bomb attack is threatened, this time at Tokyo Airport, if terrorist chief Takeshi Suyama and his colleague Tachihara are not freed. But Suyama is just a decoy and completely expendable; Tachihara is Red May's real head, and after his escape only astute work by the team, especially Hacker, determines his next target and enables them to plan his recapture. It's not without cost; Raiden is terribly wounded and is carried off in a mysterious black vehicle.



A strange blonde is meanwhile in mental and computerised communication with two others, Ashura and the child Flare, and they are picking off the members of Red May one by one.. The last remaining terrorists are holed up in an apartment with a child as hostage. In the attempt to save the child, Angel runs into Ashura and Flare and sees the extent of Ashura's psychic powers; she also sees Raiden, who was thought to be either dead or held in hospital, and is knocked out chasing after him.

Taki learns from Tachihara (under torture) that people in the highest of places, senior business and political figures, are also hoping to gain from a politically and economically destabilised Japan. Sadly, Taki is no politician. He suspects that some of his superiors may be involved in the plot, so he goes along to ask them. This only succeeds in putting them on their guard, and they realise that the only way to avoid being seriously embarrassed is to ensure that Taki and his team don't mention this to anyone else. The publicity machine cranks into action and the mass media, as well as the other armed forces, are informed that Special Security and its chief are really highly organised terrorists. The forces of law and order mass to attack them.

Angel comes round in a laboratory and is told that, as his injuries were so severe, Raiden has been repaired with a special ceramic skin and hugely powerful enhancements to his body. If she wishes, she can become a supersoldier like him, and have access to special weapons and powers beyond anything an ordinary human could hope for.

So the anime story finally meets its manga origins. Angel's decision, the conclusion of the political machinations against her and her colleagues, the terrorist problem and the new psychic threat, are all resolved in the final three bloody episodes, culminating in ANGEL COP 6. Will there be more adventures for Angel and her colleagues? Wait and see.

TAKU KITAZAKI : THE ANGEL'S CREATOR

Born in July 1966 in Shizuoka Prefecture, Taku Kitazaki had his first professional comic, *Vacant Mina*, published in Shonen Big Comic when he was just 17 and in his second year at high school. His early ambition had been to follow in his father's footsteps as a public servant; it wasn't until his first year of high school that he decided to become a comic artist. He began drawing in the school's art club, where he claims he wasn't particularly good! By the second year, still struggling, he got a lot of help and criticism from an older pupil who also wanted to turn professional,



and this helped him improve until he eventually made a professional sale. *Vacant Mina* was followed by *Aspiring to Heroism*, *War Story Busty* (Bandai Cybercomics), *Spiral Zone* (Bandai), *Tearful Soldier*, and *Like This Love Song* (Shonen Sunday Magazine).

Though much of his work seems to have a strong sf influence, he says he doesn't have a particular love of science fiction. "I'd prefer that we look for meaning in today!" As a child, he watched a lot of SF TV shows, like MAZINGER Z, ULTRAMAN and KAMEN RIDER, but even then he was more interested in the manga tie-ins than the shows themselves. He cites magazines like *Adventure King* and *Terebi Magazine* as great loves, and adds "It may sound naughty, but I never read Shonen Jump that much!" He also says that you could hardly think *Angel Cop* and *War Story Busty* as representative of his youthful taste in television!

Like This Love Song is one of the works he has enjoyed most because it was such a departure for him; he feels his work often lacks a sense of humour, but that with this story

he's "finally managed to produce something quite light-hearted". The difference between his action-adventure manga and this more thoughtful, tender story is striking.

However, he doesn't see himself as an auteur with a personal axe to grind. He feels that as a manga creator it's his role to think seriously about what his readers might want to see, rather than what he wants to write. But if he has a choice, he wants to continue exploring the lighter side of manga. "I'd really like to do something more humorous; I think it would stretch me to the limit."

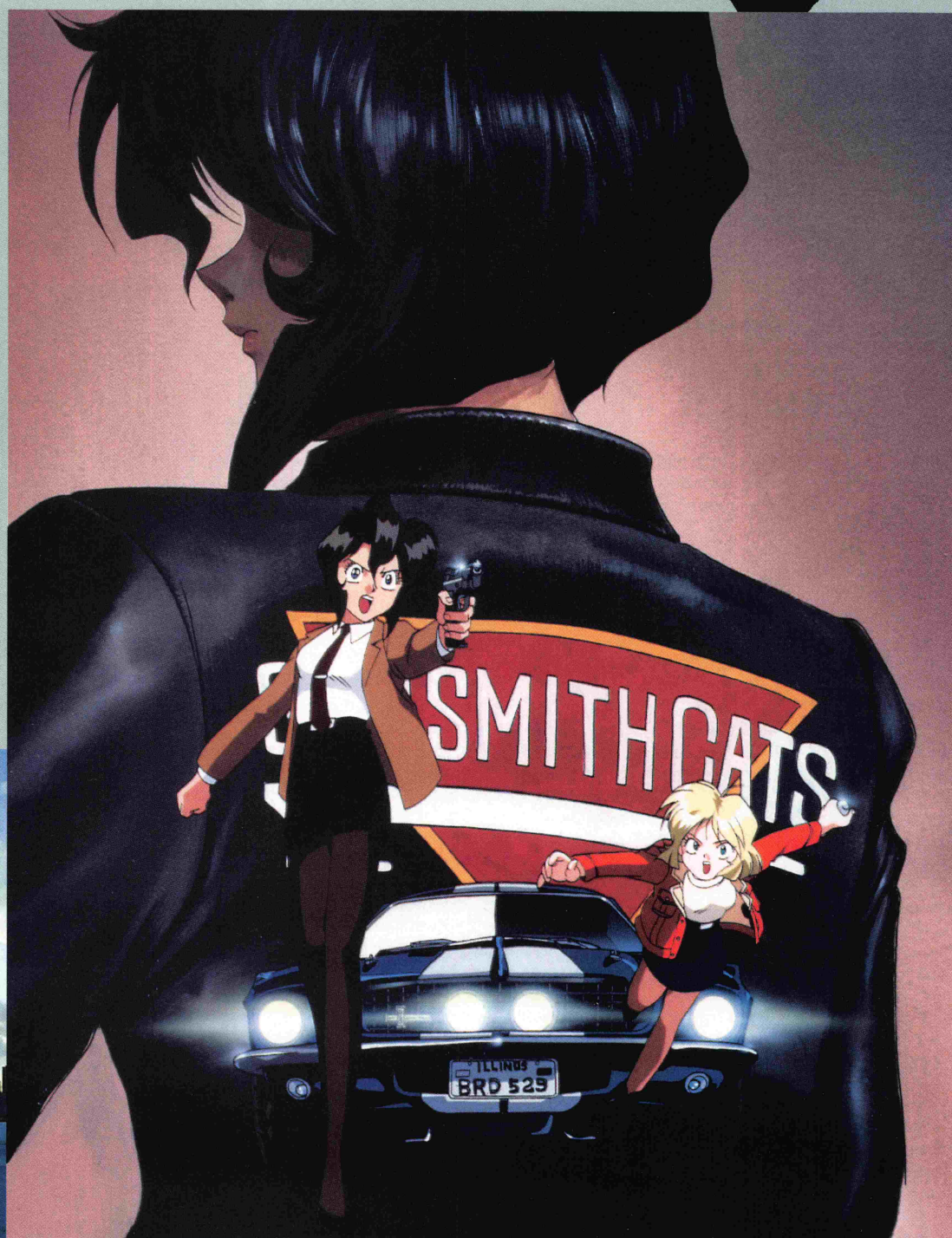
We acknowledge with thanks the help and information provided by the following sources: Newtype, B-Club, KAPPA Magazine.



ANGEL COP

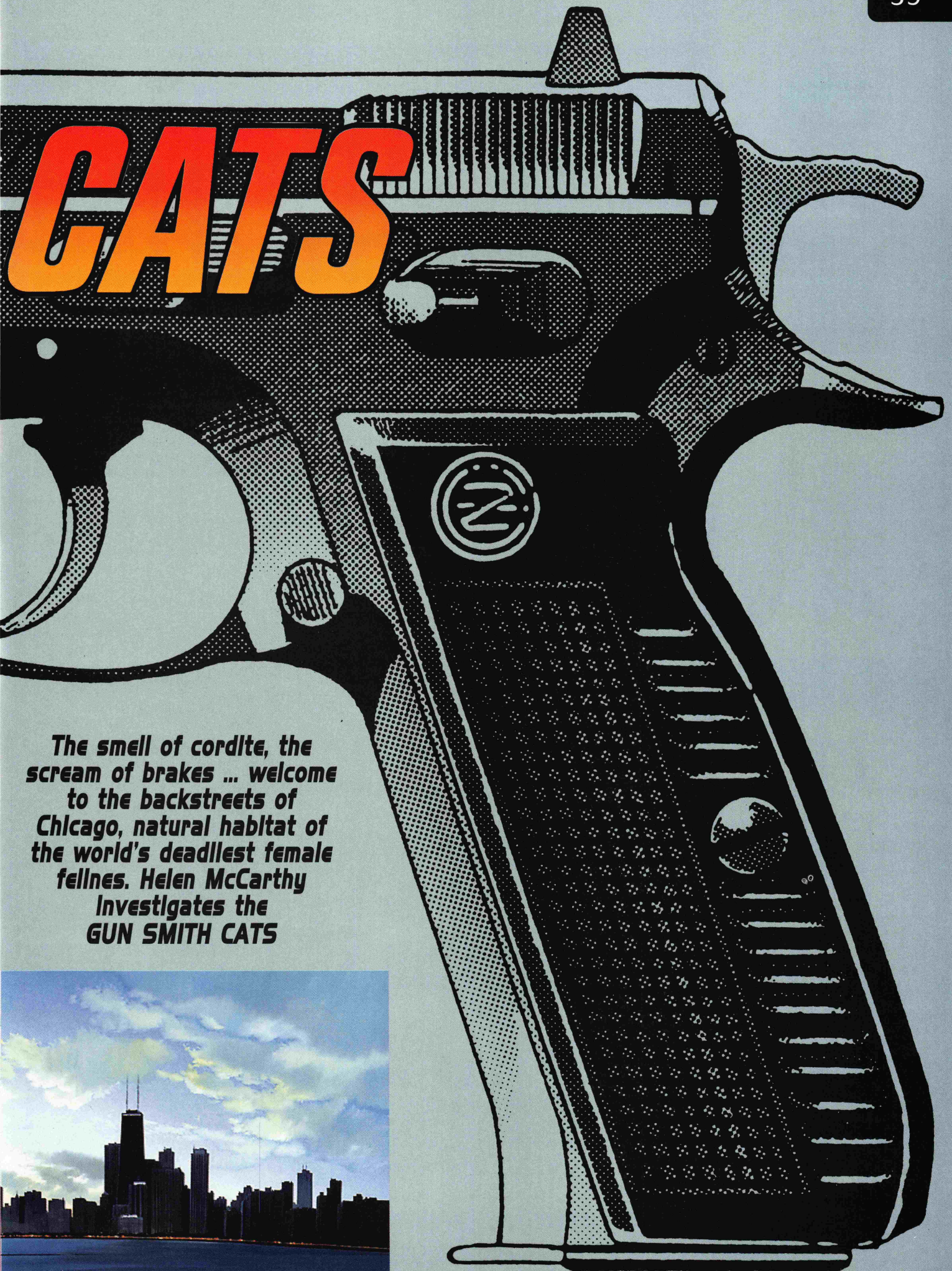


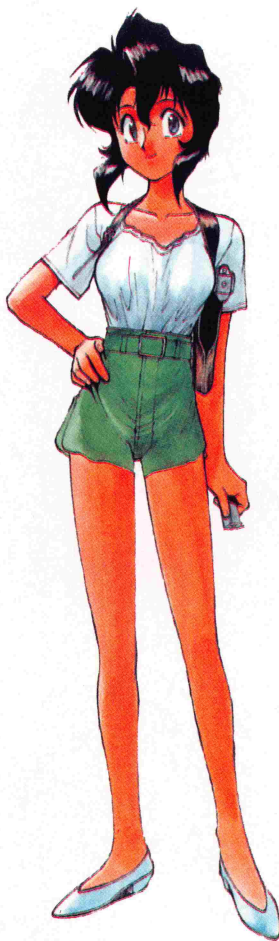
GUNSMITH



CATS

**The smell of cordite, the
scream of brakes ... welcome
to the backstreets of
Chicago, natural habitat of
the world's deadliest female
felines. Helen McCarthy
Investigates the
GUN SMITH CATS**





RALLY VINCENT

BECKY FARRAH



GUN SMITH CATS - THE MANGA

Originally published in 1991 in Kodansha's COMIC AFTERNOON, the five parts have each sold about 250,000 copies. An edited version of the manga is now being released in English by Dark Horse Comics. Gun and car freaks love the manga as much as comic fans, because of the level of detail and accuracy which Kenichi Sonoda puts into his work.

GUN SMITH CATS - THE ANIME

The anime is a completely original story, with all the usual Sonoda trademarks of beautiful girls, guns and cars drawn with meticulous accuracy, and set in his favourite Western city, Chicago. He was heavily involved in the production, helping the staff to get the characters and details just right. The team went to America for a location report and the music and sound effects were actually produced in Chicago and Los Angeles, with an American producer at the helm.

GUN SMITH CATS CHAPTER 1 - THE STORY

In a suburb of Chicago, two men get out of a remodelled Cobra and enter an old hotel. They're after a bail jumper, one Jonathan Washington. He's waiting for them in a top-floor room, gun at the ready; but before the tension can explode the room fills with smoke from a grenade pitched by Minnie May, and Rally smashes Washington's arm. Score one more for Chicago's top bounty hunting team.

But something doesn't smell quite right ... Rally's top informer, Becky, thinks there's something fishy going on. Why had Washington bothered to escape? He was being held on a drug possession rap but there was no proof of his guilt. He'd probably have walked, so why run?

Back in the shop, Rally's pondering on this problem when she gets a visit from detective Bill Collins of A.T.F. (the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms control division). Collins wants her help. It seems that Washington is actually selling guns, not drugs, and the ATF need Rally's co-operation to get the evidence on him. Just in case she doesn't feel co-operative, Collins warns her that illegal possession of unlicensed guns, bombs and dangerous objects could land her in trouble and offers to help her out with licences and exempt her from the usual fees.

She still doesn't feel co-operative, but Collins doesn't give up easily. That night, by a strange coincidence, three burglars break into the house she shares with Minnie May, after their gun collections stored in the basement. Rally drives them off but while she's occupied an ATF



team makes a raid and discovers a large quantity of Class 3 firearms and no Class 3 licences.

Rally decides to co-operate. The next morning she goes to court, pays Washington's bail, and asks him if she can buy some guns from him in return.

Three days later, she turns up at the address Washington gave her to pick up the guns - and finds Collins is already there, and not voluntarily. There's a leak in the ATF Chicago section and Washington has been getting inside information all the time. The gun dealer has set up Rally to kill Collins and take the rap while he gets away. So what's Rally going to do? You'll have to wait for the video release to find out!

GUN SMITH CATS - THE LEADING LADIES

RALLY VINCENT

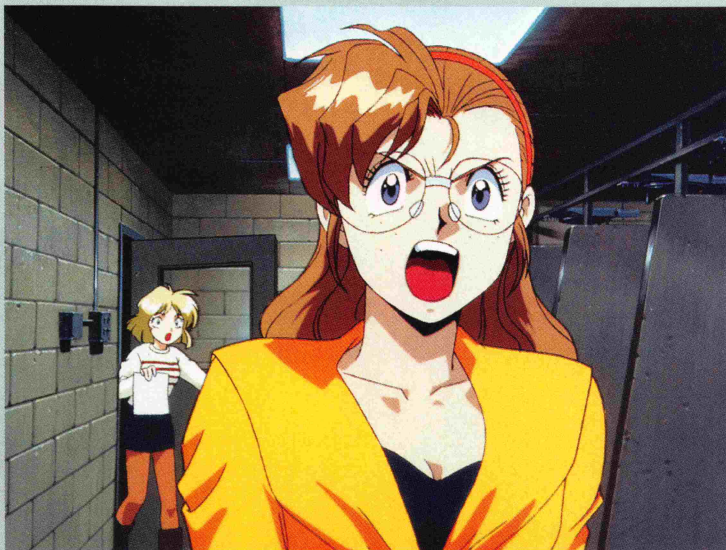
She's just 19 but claims to be 21 - because she couldn't get a bounty hunter's licence and permission to manage a gun shop otherwise. Just how she managed to pull this off is a well-kept secret. Rally stands 170

cm tall and weighs in at 51 kilos. She's 1/8th American Indian but was brought up in England, and has acquired a vast array of skills in gun handling. Calling herself a 'gun specialist', she's a top bounty hunter but spends most of her time running her gun shop GUN SMITH CATS. Her usual weapon is a Cz75 (said to be the best army gun) but she can use just about anything and sometimes hides a specially remodelled gun up her sleeve. She drives a much-loved Shelby Cobra GT 500 with Goodyear eagle tyres, special shock absorbers, steering built by MOMO and a hypertuned engine. The similarity between her name and that of RALLY CHEYANNE in RIDING BEAN has led to much fan speculation on possible links between the characters.

MAY HOPKINS

Usually known as Minnie May, this tiny blonde is just 17 years old, weighs a negligible 38kg and stands just 146 cm tall. She's had an even more chequered past than Rally, having spent a good deal of her youth in a brothel in Chinatown where she met Ken Taki (aka Takizawa) a half-Japanese explosives





expert. It was his 'lectures' that turned the adolescent Minnie May into a bomb freak, and it's for him that she deliberately keeps herself looking as young as possible - she wants to make sure he'll still recognise her when they meet again.

BECKY FARRAH

She's 23 and an intelligence researcher - an informant, though she prefers the term 'pursuit woman'. She can be contacted via a special line for intelligence workers on the computer network, but she isn't cheap - her business sense is very well developed! She gets on well with Rally and May despite being hopeless with guns. She's 169 cm tall and weighs 52 kilos.

GUN SMITH CATS - THE EVENT

The three leading voice actresses and director Takeshi Mori were guests at two special promotional events at the end of September in Tokyo and Osaka. The promo films for Volumes 1 & 2 were shown, the guests gave a talk show and the image songs were premiered. The usual 'lottery of gorgeous presents' took place for all those lucky

enough to get tickets.

GUN SMITH CATS - THE RELEASES

More presents come with the various releases of the tapes, LDs and CDs. The information video, GSC CHAPTER ZERO, has scenes from the animation introduced by a 'detective' who has been ordered to investigate the GUN SMITH CATS video and find out all about it. There are also introductions to the voice actresses and sound producer, Peter Arthkin, and comments from the staff and from Sonoda-sensei himself.

The CD-single ENDLESS SIGHT released on 1st September included an animation card with messages from the three leading ladies in an original airmail envelope. The group GUN SMITH CATS is made up of the three voice actresses themselves.

The first story, CHAPTER 1, will be on sale on video and LD on 1st November, and the first pressing includes 'Gun Smith Cash' - specially printed \$1 dollar notes with pictures of Rally, Minnie May and Becky. These releases will also

include details of some special benefits for fans who collect all the GUN SMITH CATS releases.

CHAPTER 2 is due next Spring and CHAPTER 3 in the summer of 1996, but no firm dates have been announced yet.

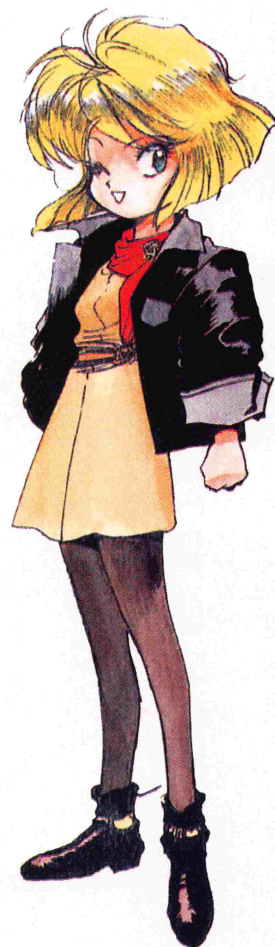
KENICHI SONODA - CHICAGO LOVE AFFAIR

GUN SMITH CATS is more than just an action-adventure packed with excitement; encoded in its minutely observed details and atmospheric urban settings is the next verse of Kenichi Sonoda's lovesong to the downside of the American dream. Born in December 1962 in Osaka, the celebrated chara designer and manga creator, started drawing as a child and cites Fujiko-Fujio, creators of DORAEMON, among his very earliest influences. He began to write his own stories in elementary school, and by the time most of his high-school contemporaries were thinking about university entrance he was working on various fanzines with friends. An anime company picked up a copy and offered him a job as a chara designer.

Although he took three years of classes at the Namba Designer College, a school for would-be designers in Osaka, he credits his anime and manga influences as the things that taught him most. Titles like gag-manga TENSAI BAKOBON, ghost story OBAKE NO Q-TARO and giant robot shows MAZINGER Z and GUNDAM influenced him strongly, and he describes himself as "still under the influence of Fujishiko Hosono and Masahiro Shibata".

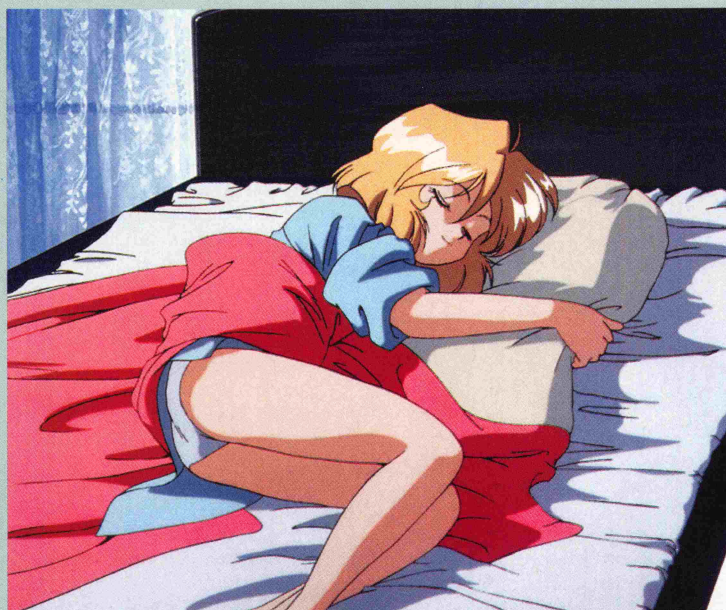
His first outing as a chara designer, in the 1985 womens' pro-wrestling drama WANNA BE'S, is not widely considered among his best work; the OAV itself is pleasant but not especially outstanding. His first big success came with GALL FORCE: ETERNAL STORY in 1986. The all-female crew of the starship STAR-LEAF rapidly achieved superstar status in Japan and other OAVs followed, but their success was overtaken by that of Sonoda's next character creations, the Knight Sabers of BUBBLE GUM CRISIS.

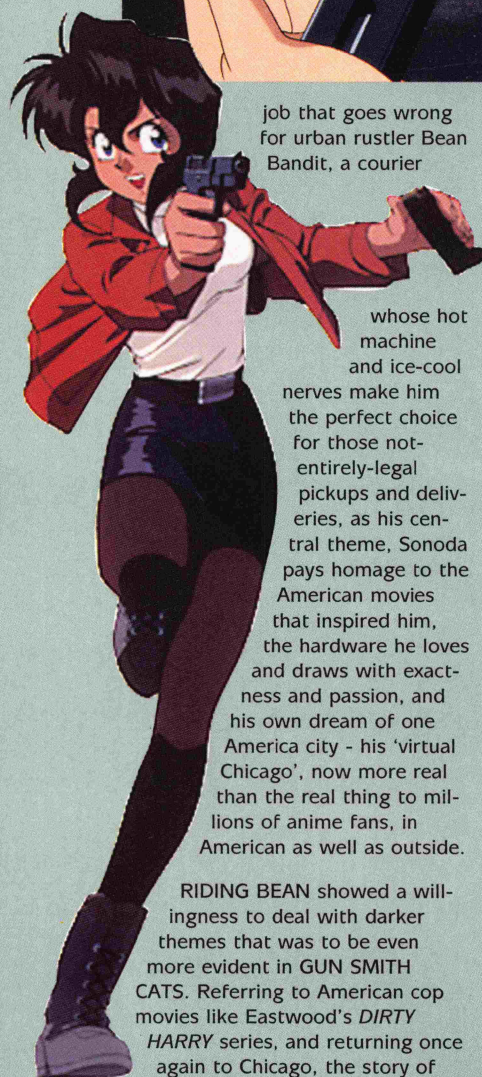
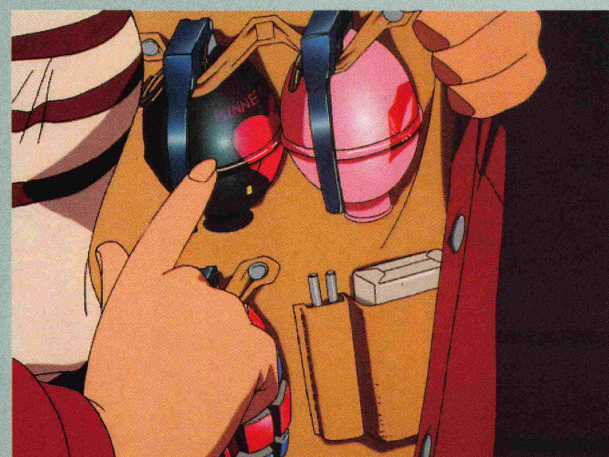
However, the stories in which these characters appeared had been created by others; Sonoda's own creative input was restricted to designing the characters themselves. Their enduring popularity proves that he did an excellent job; but the work in which he takes most pride is his next creation, RIDING BEAN, which exists both in manga form and as an OAV made by Youmex in 1989. Created, written, and designed by Sonoda, these hard-edged characters in their contemporary urban setting were light years away from the sci-fi deities of cute which had made his name. Using the story of a



MAY HOPKINS

BEAN BANDIT





job that goes wrong for urban rustler Bean Bandit, a courier

whose hot machine and ice-cool nerves make him the perfect choice for those not-entirely-legal pickups and deliveries, as his central theme, Sonoda pays homage to the American movies that inspired him, the hardware he loves and draws with exactness and passion, and his own dream of one America city - his 'virtual Chicago', now more real than the real thing to millions of anime fans, in American as well as outside.

RIDING BEAN showed a willingness to deal with darker themes that was to be even more evident in GUN SMITH CATS. Referring to American cop movies like Eastwood's *DIRTY HARRY* series, and returning once again to Chicago, the story of

Rally Vincent, her partner "Minnie" May Hopkins and their adventures in the bounty hunting business contain scenes and ideas which some Western audiences find disturbing. The manga brilliantly portrays scenes in which sex and violence play a central role, though not necessarily in that order or in connection with each other, and the character of Minnie May has been especially controversial, with some changes being made in Studio Proteus' translation of the manga for Dark Horse to accommodate legal requirements, as well as prejudices, in this matter. Minnie is seventeen in the manga, and talks quite calmly of her stint in a brothel when she was thirteen and the 'pile of money' she made. She first met her boyfriend Ken during this period, and on meeting him again in the manga she tells him she has deliberately kept her child-like image so that he'll recognise her as still the same beautiful thirteen-year-old girl he first knew. In an interview in **Kappa Magazine (Nov. 93)** before the anime version of GUN SMITH CATS was made, Sonoda talked about the creation of the character:

"Minnie May is really a sort of cocktail of characters I wanted to create, mixed into just one; to begin with I meant to create simply a beautiful young girl, but in the end I got carried away and somehow things

shifted involuntarily from beauty to sensuality. I think that men in general desire two completely opposite types of woman: the innocent little girl who needs protection, and the mature woman who gives the love of a mother. For me, the protective instinct predominates, therefore that seventeen-year-old with the face of a little girl emerged. When I design female characters, I try first of all to express *eros*; if I don't put in the sensual aspect when I design the face and body of a woman, the result won't be so good. I really prefer to design female characters even younger than Minnie; after all, in America many girls of that age have sexual experience and many are even mothers. I understand that very often when I design anything like this I'm inviting some harsh criticism; but being stubborn, the more they ask me why I do it, the more I feel pushed to continue."

He also says that he is fascinated, like many people, by machines, but that guns are a particular passion because they are scarce and unusual in Japan. He owns a collection of replica guns and books on guns, and loves to draw them - hence the accuracy of the hardware in his stories, which can be recognised from his drawings even without the help of the footnotes which he frequently adds, giving such technical data as calibre of ammunition and barrel bore. In the same way, owning a car in Tokyo isn't cheap or easy - a parking space has to be rented or bought before you can legally buy a vehicle, and the congested streets make motoring a nightmare. Most Sonoda fans can only dream of gunning a Cobra or Porsche down urban roads at speeds in excess of sanity, but they find their dreams expressed in his superb car-chase sequences.

Despite the accuracy of Sonoda's portrayal of America's mean streets, there's one very small but telling detail he's missed. Dark Horse Comics invited readers of the translated GUN SMITH CATS preview copies to write in and tell them how accurately Americans thought Sonoda portrays America in its pages. One reader, full of praise for the story, commented sadly that the two things missing from Sonoda's Chicago were the two she'd happily miss in the real city - litter & graffiti.

But as far as action and adventure go, there's nothing missing here. Not one darn thing.



CAST

RALLY VINCENT
Michiko Netani
MAY HOPKINS (Minnie May)
Kae Araki
BECKY FARRAH
Aya Hisakawa
BILL COLLINS
Yoshitada Otsuka
JONATHON WASHINGTON
Toyo Ikemizu
GEORGE BLACK
Daisuke Gori

STAFF

ORIGINAL WORK &
ORIGINAL CHARA DESIGN
Kenichi Sonoda
DIRECTOR, STORYBOARDS
Takeshi Mori
SCREENPLAY
Takeshi Kanako
ANIME CHARA DESIGN
Norihiro Matsubara
ANIME DIRECTOR
Toshimitsu Kobayashi
GUN DESIGN
Keiyu Fukuda
GUNS PRODUCTION
Hidetoshi Yoshida
CARS PRODUCTION
Koji Sugiura
ART DIRECTOR
Kazuo Nagai (Studio Kazemasa)

EDITOR
Hideyuki Kasuga (J-FILM)
COLOURING
Kumiko Nakayama
PRODUCER
Kazuya Murata
OP STORYBOARD
Masahiro Maeda
OP ANIME DIRECTOR
Hidenori Matsubara
OP MUSIC
Peter Arthkin
ANIMATION PRODUCED BY
O.L.M.
PRODUCED & RELEASED BY
Kodansha, VAP, TBS

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Kodansha, VAP, TBS

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With thanks to **YOURI FOSTER**
for translation assistance.



Rally Mk 1 from RIDING BEAN



BABEL II

: MESOPOTAMIA TO CYBERIA

HELEN McCARTHY looks at a Biblical legend reworked for videojocks

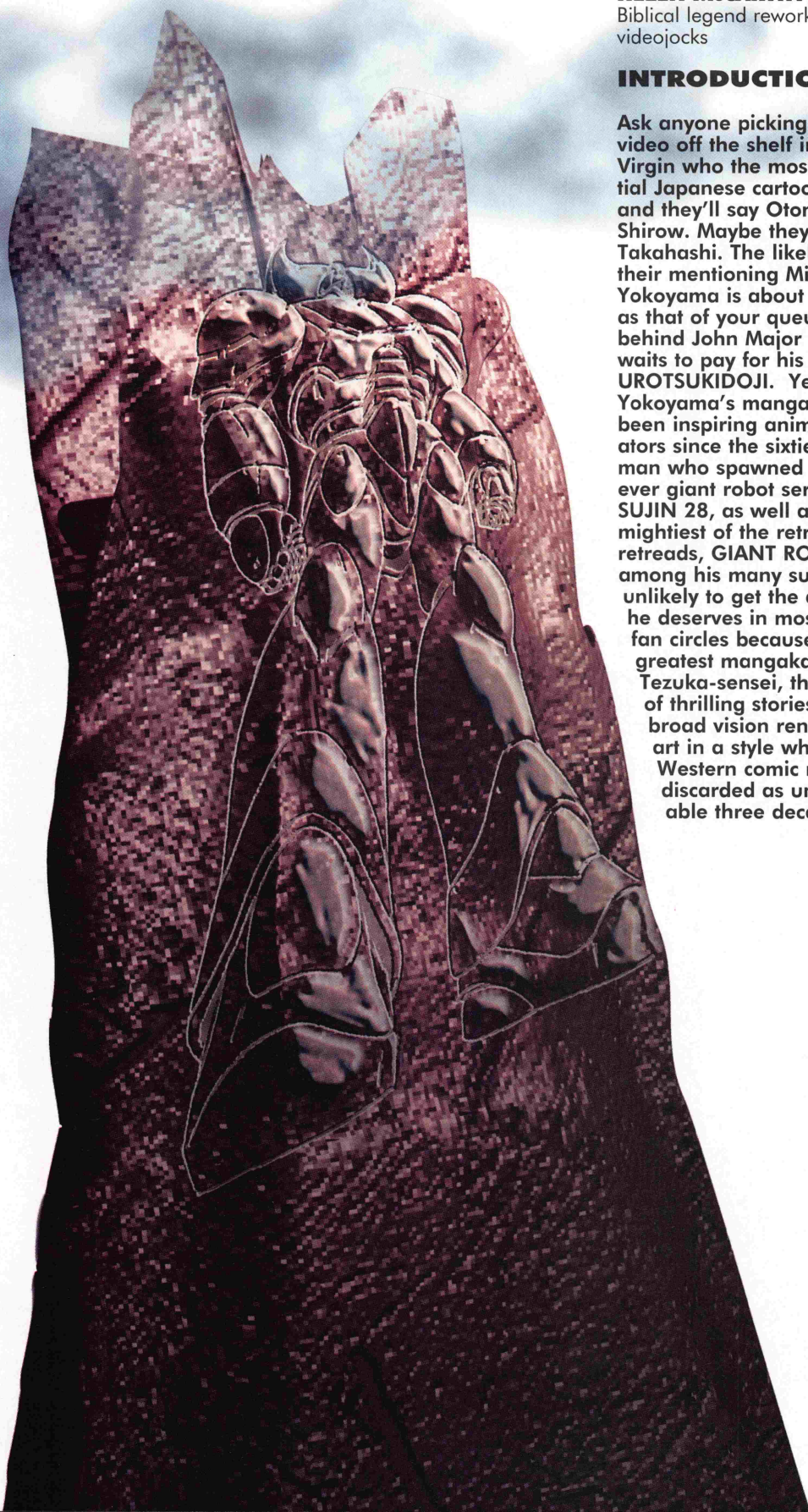
INTRODUCTION

Ask anyone picking an anime video off the shelf in HMV or Virgin who the most influential Japanese cartoonists are, and they'll say Otomo or Shirow. Maybe they'll say Takahashi. The likelihood of their mentioning Mitsuteru Yokoyama is about as high as that of your queuing behind John Major while he waits to pay for his copy of UROTSUKIDOJI. Yet Yokoyama's manga have been inspiring anime creators since the sixties. The man who spawned the first ever giant robot series, TETSUJIN 28, as well as the mightiest of the retro-robot retreads, GIANT ROBO, among his many successes, is unlikely to get the attention he deserves in most British fan circles because, like the greatest mangaka of all, Tezuka-sensei, this creator of thrilling stories with a broad vision rendered his art in a style which the Western comic market discarded as unfashionable three decades ago.

With the forthcoming release of GIANT ROBO and the current release of BABEL II, Yokoyama's storytelling, now dressed in a style 'modern' audiences can relate to, has a chance to win new admirers. Released in 1992 in Japan as BABIL NISEI (usually translated as BABEL II or BABEL JUNIOR), the four-part OAV series reworks the 1973 anime TV series and 11 volume manga with more cybertrappings, but preserves the original story's inspirations, which go back much further - to Middle Eastern legend and the mythology that helped to form the Old Testament.

According to the Bible, after Noah and his family were saved from the disaster of the Great Flood in the Ark, his descendants settled in the valley of the Euphrates, in what was to become Mesopotamia. History tells us that a great civilisation grew up there in the third millennium BC; by 2100 BC economic and social evolution had progressed far enough for the famous Queen Semiramis to enjoy her Hanging Gardens, great terraces adorned with exotic plants and trees rising high in the air. The city of Babylon was renowned as mistress of a political and trading empire; yet this power and wealth could not prevent her crumbling. The Bible puts this down to the increasing pride of Noah's children, who grew so arrogant that God punished them by rendering them unable to understand each other. Their mighty buildings were filled with uncomprehending, incomprehensible sounds which still bear the name of 'babble', and with no means of communication, their civilisation fell. History sees war or economic upheaval as a possible cause. Yokoyama goes for alien intervention.

A race of aliens creates an incredibly advanced technology centre in the Euphrates basin in the third millennium BC. They also create the 'Three Servants', mighty beings with special abilities, each with an alien power unit within it, each easily able to defeat the armies of any country on its own - the huge prehistoric bird Repros, the shapeshifter Rodem and the amphibious robot Poseidon. Naturally, there's a certain amount of interspecies contact with the indigenous population. One such 'contact' between an alien and a human woman results in a bloodline which surfaces again almost five thousand years later on the other side of the world. The aliens have gone, the desert sands have covered their headquarters, their 'Three





Servants' have vanished under the seas, and the dim memory of their achievement has passed into folklore. In modern Japan, a quiet teenager named Koichi starts to have strange dreams, sometimes when he's wide awake. In one of them, a mysterious girl calls to him. In another, a voice addresses him as 'Babel II' and urges him to fulfil his destiny...

Koichi is a psychic of great potential, but with no awareness of his own powers. The girl he's been glimpsing, Juju, is one of a mysterious group, the Psychists, led by a charismatic yet sinister figure, and she hopes Koichi can be persuaded to join them. Her fellow cult member, Wong, is less welcoming, attacking Koichi when he first infiltrates their hideout. When Koichi is brought by Juju to their ship to meet 'the Master' Yomi, Wong is detailed to finish him off if he won't agree to become one of them. The boy's remarkable powers manifest themselves again, but those powers alone are not enough to save him this time, and only the unexpected arrival of a huge dragon, a shape-shifting panther and a mighty amphibious robot gets him safely off the ship. As they carry him over the city, he realises that he may have been rescued but he won't be going home. Events have overtaken him and whether he likes it or not he is

being carried towards his strange new destiny, away from his parents and classmates, perhaps never to see them again. When they reach the deserts of Mesopotamia, he uncovers the alien base hidden in the ruins of the Tower of Babel, and his real battle begins. The descendant of an alien-human bloodline is the only thing that stands between mankind and disaster.

THE THREE INCARNATIONS

There are a number of differences between the earlier anime and manga incarnations and the OAV series. In the manga, which ran in Akita Shoten's *Shonen Champion* comic for two years in the 60s, the dragon Ropros was originally a giant prehistoric bird, and though Rodem is still a shapeshifter and Poseidon an amphibious robot, both have been restyled. The alien invader (called Yomi in the manga and TV series: Yomi is the name of the Psychist Master in the OAV series) sent a wide range of troops against Koichi, from automata in human form and stone monsters to multitentacled horrors created by alien genetic engineering. The alien creatures of the manga are sharply divided, servants of the good Babel or the evil Yomi. The style of both TV and OAV series

was set by the character designs of Shingo Araki, who after a long career in anime and manga describes Koichi as probably the best character he ever designed. (See below for more on this remarkable artist.) However the basic concept of the series has shifted slightly from Yokoyama's original manga. He saw the story as a kind of ninja-fantasy taking place in his present day, the sixties; the Cold War was at its height, and the nuclear threat still a very real memory in Japan. However Takeshi Tamiya, the director of the TV series, emphasised the SF elements, and included a much greater stress on mecha fights between Poseidon and the various robotic cohorts created to further Yomi's evil plans. Given the fashion for robot anime in 1973, when shows like MAZINGER Z were all the rage, this is hardly surprising. Additionally, Japan's narrower perspective on world affairs in those days was reflected in the location of the Tower of Babel, which, ignoring the historical evidence, was sited near Hokkaido.

Now OAV supervising director Yoshihisa Matsumoto has brought the elements of the original story into the present day. Ropros is more of a dragon than a prehistoric creature, though still with recognisable links to his earlier form. Poseidon is more massive and less blocky than the simpler early design in the tradition of Yokoyama's other great robot TETSUJIN 28. Only Ropros hasn't changed much, still feline and graceful in its usual form. Matsumoto is also drawing on a wider public acceptance of psychic phenomena and an interest in 'mysterious' talents like Uri Geller's spoonbending. Drawing on a wider sf tradition, the political and social problems of people with extraordinary powers in an ordinary world and the exploitation of those powers for evil form a pivotal part of the story.

THE END?

The manga story ends with human victory; the body of alien warlord Yomi is carried off into space by his people, and Koichi and his three mighty companions return to the Tower, their mission accomplished. However, an extra episode in the last volume, BABEL NISEI GAIDEN, is a complete departure from the continuity of the series. At the end of the last great battle, Yomi is rejuvenated; but of Babel II and his friends there is no sign ... And in the new OAV series, the sinister 'Master' who seeks to take over the world with his psychic army is named Yomi, and is

also linked with the Tower of Babel and its powers. So, as with all great myths, there is an uncertainty. Man's own past carries the seeds of his destruction. Does mankind have a saviour sleeping somewhere, waiting to come to our aid when we need him most? The latest adventures of BABEL II provide an answer.

OAV SERIES CREW

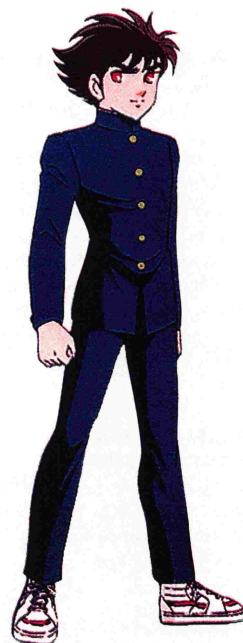
Supervising Director	Yoshihisa Matsumoto
Screenplay	Masashi Namiki
Script Supervisor	Koichi Ohata
Original story & design	Mitsuteru Yokoyama
Chara design	Shingo Araki
Art director	Hiroaki Sato
Set & Vehicle Effects Design	Keichi Sato
Production	Sobhi Planning

English version :	
Directed & produced by	Carl Macek
Story editor	Fred Patten
English dialogue	Steve Kramer
Music	David Tolley

OAV SERIES CHARACTERS

KOICHI/BABEL II

A quiet high school boy, he has no idea that he's part-alien and psychic. In the first episode he is drawn into the web of Yomi's plot by Juju's psychic contacts, but he also hears the voice of his alien destiny. At first unable to control his powers, his quiet determination soon enables him to become a powerful fighter against evil. He is very attracted to Juju.





YOMI

'Master' of the Psychist group, he intends to lead them to dominate the world by using his wealth and access to high technology to 'remodel' people into psychic soldiers. It's the use of illegally obtained body parts in this 'remodelling' process which first gets the authorities on his trail. Tall, dark and charismatic, he too is part-alien.

DOCTOR YAMAZAKI

A highly intelligent and dedicated scholar, he is studying the phenomena associated with the Psychist group and is determined to oppose their evil.

YUKA OZENSHI

A Government investigator on the trail of the Psychists, she thinks they are ordinary criminals, though very powerful ones. She doesn't believe in their powers or Koichi's abilities at first, but he finally convinces her to take the threat they pose seriously.

JUJU

A beautiful young Psychist with long lilac hair, she sincerely believes that Yomi wants to create a better world for psychics and ordinary humans, and serves him faithfully. Only after seeing evidence of his evil does she abandon her loyalty to him.

WONG, HAMMER and NICORA

Three of the leading Psychist Warriors, they are very different types, but all physically attractive and intelligent young men. All three consider non-psychics beneath their notice and quite expendable in the Master's service. Wong is a tall, conservatively-dressed managerial type; Hammer has long purple hair and dresses in leather; Nicora is a somewhat androgynous dandy with blue hair and a fondness for roses.

BABEL II TV SERIES - EPISODE LISTING

Broadcast commenced 1st Jan 1973
 Messenger from 5,000 Years Past
 Fearful Stone Giant Gohriki
 The Dark Emperor Yomi
 The Three Servants
 This is Telekinesis!

The Ultimate Danger! The Tower of Babel!
 A New Commander
 Satan's Secret Fortress
 Cut To The Fearsome Rocky Mountains
 Baran! Certain Death Robot!
 Attack of Android #2
 Robot Machine X1
 Return to the Man-Made Planet
 Look Out! Changeling Bird Ropros!
 The Madness of Notre Dame
 A Dream of a Trillion Yen
 Race Into Darkness
 The Whistling Demons
 Attack of the Mammoth Gorilla
 The Great Battle In Space
 The Superhuman Baby
 Deep-Sea Crab Robot
 Invitation From The Dead
 Zoro, Who Froze The Eternal City
 The Battle of Dead V
 Babel III! Main Attack!
 A New Spirit!
 The Golden Amoeba
 The Guitar of Death
 The Robot Messenger Assassin
 Undead Horse, Blue Pegasus
 The Ashes of the Dust Devil
 The Fearful Skull Demoness
 Hunter of the Midsummer Snow
 The Mad Queen Bee
 Yomi's Secret Soldier Gohriki #2
 The Mysterious Alien Epsilon
 Fight in the Tokyo Underground
 Babel II vs Yomi! Fight to the Death!



With grateful acknowledgement to many writers in THE ANIME, ANIMAGE, and NEWTYPE (Japan), MANGAZINE (Italian publication by Granata Press), KAPPA MAGAZINE (Italian publication by Edizioni Star Comics) and ANIMELAND (France), whose work has been so useful in my research.

SHINGO ARAKI - CHARACTERS IN ACTION

One of the most respected figures in the anime world, Shingo Araki has made his life's work in interpreting manga characters - appropriately enough for one who started his working life as a manga artist. Born in Nagoya in 1939, he was just 18 when he made his professional debut in MACHI (City) magazine for local publishers Central Bunko. By turning out about 50 pages a month he had completed around 60 manga stories by the time he was 26. Ready for a change, he went to Tokyo in 1965 and joined Osamu Tezuka's studio Mushi Productions as an animator. He made his animation debut on JUNGLE TAITEI - better known in the West as KIMBA THE WHITE LION. From helping to animate Tezuka manga like this and RIBON NO KISHI, aka PRINCESS KNIGHT, he went on to work on the anime versions of manga by a host of great names such as Fujiko Fujio, Noboru Kawasaki, Shotaro Ishinomori, Masami Kurumada, Tetsuya Chiba, Chikako Urano, Eiichi Fukui, Go Nagai, Mitsuteru Yokoyama, Ikki Kajiwara, Yoshitaka Amano, Ryoko Ikeda, Kaoru Toda, Leiji Matsumoto and Monkey Punch.

From animation he moved on to do layouts, to assist the designers, then to

design in his own right, often filling the role of sakkun, or supervisor, and taking on responsibility for the storyboards from which the director and key animators would work. By 1967 he had added Tokyo Movie Shinsha to his client roster and the following year he did his first work for Toei Doga under the direction of Rin Taro. These three studios have formed the backbone of his working life. As the young designer gained experience, his work became more and more respected, and over the years he has worked with an impressive rollcall of the industry's major directors - people such as Osamu Dezaki, Gisaburo Sugii, Isao Takahata, Hayao Miyazaki, Tadao Nagahama, Shigetsugu Yoshida, Tomoharu Katsumata, Noboru Shiguro and the aforementioned Rin Taro. His work, though not his name, is widely known in the West from the many Japanese-Western co-productions in which he has played a part. Fans of INSPECTOR GADGET and HEATHCLIFF know his work as well as SAINT SEIYA buffs!

His studio, Araki Productions, is headed up by himself and his longtime collaborator Michi Himeno, a manga artist and designer in her own right who joined him in 1973 after receiving her artschool diploma. About ten assistants work with them. At present their main work is in the field of graphics for video games.



Top Left:
TV version.

Left:
Manga version.
Main pic:
OVA version.

SHINGO ARAKI - THE WORKS

YEAR	TITLE	STUDIO	ROLE	YEAR	TITLE	STUDIO	ROLE
1965	JUNGLE TAITEI Jungle Emperor (series)	Mushi	Inbetweener, Design	1982	CHANSON NONO Nono's Song (film) GAJETTO KEIBU Inspector Gadget (pilot film) MUGEN KIDO SSX Endless Road SSX (series) SPACE COBRA (series)	TMS/DIC TMS/DIC Toei Doga TMS	Supervisor, designer Designer, supervisor Supervisor Storyboards
1966	SUSUME REO Come on, Leo! (series) GANBARE MARIN KID Keep it up, Marine Kid! (series)	Mushi Terebi Doga	Design Design	1983	GAJETTO KEIBU Inspector Gadget (series) AI SHITE NAITO Lovemaking Night (series) CATS EYE (series) LUPIN SANSEI Lupin III (3rd tv series) TONGARIBOSHI NO MEMORU Little Beret Memoru (series)	TMS/DIC Toei Doga TMS TMS Toei Doga	Supervisor Supervisor Layouts Supervisor Supervisor
1967	RIBON NO KISHI Princess Knight (series) PAMAN (series)	Mushi TMS	design Design, storyboards	1984	MEITANTEI HOLMES Great Detective Holmes (series) GLASS NO KAMEN The Glass Mask (series) HEATHCLIFF (series)	TMS, RAI Eiken TMS, DIC	Storyboards Designer Designer, supervisor
1968	WANPAKU TANTEIDAN Rogues' Investigation Corps (series) KYOJIN NO HOSHI Star of the Giants (series) ANIMAL ONE (series) SABU TO ICHI TORIMONOHIAKE Sabu & Ichi's Investigations (series)	Mushi TMS Mushi Toei, Mushi	Design Design Desi Design	1985	HAI STEPPIJUN Yes, Stepjun (series)	Toei Doga	Designer, supervisor
1969	DORORO (series) OTOKO IPPIKI GAKIDAISHO Boy's Gang Boss - What A Bastard! (series) ATTACKER NUMBER ONE (series)	Mushi Tokyo TV Doga TMS	Design Design Design	1986	AMON SAGA (OAV) OKUBYONA VENUS Timid Venus (OAV) MAPLETOWN MONOGATARI Mapletown Tales (series) YOUNG ASTRONAUTS (pilot film) AMERICAN RABBIT (movie) GI JOE (movie) SAINT SEIYA (series)	Sentes Victor Toei Doga Toei Doga, Marvel Toei Doga, Atlantic Toei Doga, Takara Toei Doga	Designer, senior supervisor Designer, supervisor Designer Designer Chara designer, supervisor, designer
1970	ASHITA NO JO Tomorrow's Joe (series) KIKKU NO ONI King of Kickboxers (series) MAHO NO MAKACHAN Little Witch Mako (series)	Mushi Toei Doga Toei Doga	Design supervisor Designer/supervisor Design supervisor	1987	SAINT SEIYA (movie)	Toei Doga	Chara designer, designer, supervisor
1971	CHINGO MUCHABEI (series) KUNIMATSUSAMA NO OTORI DA Mr. Kunimatsu Coming Through! (series) APPACHI YAKUGUN Basebal Team Apache (series) GENSHI SHONEN RYU Prehistoric Boy Ryu (series)	TMS Mushi Toei Doga Toei Doga	Designer, storyboards Designer Designer/supervisor Designer/supervisor	1988	SAINT SEIYA - KAMIGAMI NO ATSUKI TATAKAE Saint Seiya - the Gods' Fierce Battle (movie) SAINT SEIYA - SHINKU NO SHONEN DENSETSU Saint Seiya - Legend of Hotblooded Boys (movie)	Toei Doga Toei Doga	Chara designer, designer, supervisor Chara designer, designer, supervisor
1972	SEIGI NO AISURU MONO GEKKO KAMEN Moonlight Mask, Justice-Lover (series) MAHOTSUKAI CHAPPY Little Witch Chappy (series) AKADO SUZUNOSUKE Redbreast Suzunosuke (series) DEVILMAN (series) HAZEDON (Chief Joker) (series) PANDA KOPANDA Panda Little Panda (movie)	Knack, Ai Toei Doga TMS Toei Doga Soeisha, Tohoku TMS	Design Designer, Supervisor Designer Designer Designer	1989	FUMA NO KOJIRO Kojiro of the Fuma Clan (OAV series)	Animate, Sony	Chara designer, designer, supervisor
1973	BABIL NISEI Babel II (series) KOYA NO SHONEN ISAMU Isamu, Little Shop Boy (series) CUTIE HONEY (series)	Toei Doga TMS Toei Doga	Chara designer, supervisor Designer Chara design, designer, supervisor Chara design	1990	FUMA NO KOJIRO SEIKEN SENSOEN Kojiro of the Fuma Clan, Magic Sword War Chapter (OAV series) UMEZU KAZUO NO NORI Kazuo Umezu's Curse (OAV)	Animate, Sony Takahashi ST	Chara designer, Supervisor
1974	MAJOKKO MEG-CHAN Witch Girl Meg JUDO SANKA Judo House (series)	Toei Doga TMS	Chara design Design	1991	INFERIUSU WAKUSEI SENSU GAIDEN CONDITION GREEN Unofficial Tales of the Inferius Planetary War - Condition Green (OAV series) DRAGON FIST (OAV) SANGOKUSHI The Three Kings (series)	Hero Agency 21, Toshiba EMI Shin'ei Doga	Chara designer Chara Designer, supervisor
1975	NINGYOHIME Mermaid Princess (movie) SHONEN TOKUGAWA IEYASU Young Ieyasu Tokugawa (series) UFO ROBOT GRENDIZER (series) IKKYUSAN Mr. Ikkyu (series)	Toei Doga Toei Doga Toei Doga Toei Doga	Design Chara design Chara design Design	1992	BABIL NISEI Babel II (OAV series) FUMA NO KOJIRO FUMA HANRANHEN Kojiro of the Fuma Clan, Fuma Revolt Chapter (OAV series)	JC Staff Sohbi Animate Sony	Chara designer Chara designer Supervisor
1976	NAGAGUTSU O HAITA NEKO II Puss in Boots II (movie)	Toei Doga	Designer				
1977	WAKUSEI ROBOT DANGUARD ACE Planetary Robot Danguard Ace (series) HAKUCHO NO OJI Swan Prince (movie) SHIN KYOJIN NO HOSHI New Star of the Giants (series)	Toei Doga Toei Doga TMS	Chara designer, design, supervisor Design Supervisor				
1978	SARABA UCHU SENKAN YAMATO Farewell, Space Cruise Yamato (movie) MANGA KODOMO BUNKO Childrens' Anime Library (series)	Westcape Tack, Herald	Supervisor Designer, writer				
1979	AKAI TORI NO KOKORO Heart of the Red Bird (miniseries) TATSU NO KO TARO Dragon's Child Taro (movie) SHIN KYOJIN NO HOSHI II New Star of the Giants II (series) BERUSAIYA NO BARA Rose of Versailles, series	Shin'e Doga Toei Doga TMS TMS	Creator of 1 part Designer Designer, supervisor Chara designer, design				
1980	ULYSSES 31 (series)	TMS/DIC	Designer				
1981	LUPIN HASSEI Lupin VIII (pilot film)	MS/DIC	Chara designer, supervisor				

With grateful acknowledgement to many writers in THE ANIME, ANIMAGE, and NEWTYPE (Japan), MANGAZINE (Italian publication by Granata Press), KAPPA MAGAZINE (Italian publication by Edizioni Star Comics) and ANIMELAND (France), whose work has been so useful in my research.



Saint Seiya



Fuma No Kojiro



Toshinden 2



Mad Paradox



September 10-12 saw the second of this years ECTS shows and once again we went along to see what was happening in the UK video game scene.



Sony's stand dwarfed the show, looming over the exhibition from the far end of the hall and containing stacks of playstations and software. Polygon beat-em-up **Toshinden** appeared in its English language incarnation with a few tweaks to the controllers (no more special attacks at the push of a button HA HA HA!) and English voices (wasn't too impressed) but played just like the Japanese version. Sony's first Playstation shoot-em up **Philosoma** was also displayed and looked very nice indeed. Although the early levels were fairly average looking, the game played well and the levels linked by some of the most amazing computer video sequences I've seen. Also of note on Sony's stand was Zoom's mecha beat-em-up **Zero Divide**. Featuring some very Shirow-style robots this polygon game looked similar to **Toshinden** and played a bit like **Virtua Fighter** so we'll definitely have a closer look at this one when available. Psygnosis's futuristic racer **Wipeout** for the Playstation was available to try and very good it was too. Knocking the socks off most of the Japanese Playstation titles released so far, **Wipeout** oozed class and got my pick of one of the games of the show. My other choice of promising software was Gremlin's **Loaded**. Once again the game looked excellent and the game itself was just one huge blast fest. With a choice of six strange characters to select and, with the use of a link up cable, four player action this should be a winner.

On more of an anime front, Samurai a, French company specialising in imported anime/manga related goodies were at the show with their plans to release Japanese PC software in Europe and the UK. Staying mainly in the adult end of the market with titles such as **Dragon Knight**, **Mad Paradox** and **Do Kyu Sei** Samurai are hoping that English language versions of their releases will be on British shelves soon. As can be expected we'll be having a closer look at them in a future Games Capsule.

Sega and Nintendo were both absent from the show with Sega holding their presentation at their

London HQ and Nintendo being conspicuous in their absence with no news on their Ultra 64.

JAPANESE NEWS

As you can imagine, the Japanese game scene never sleeps for too long so here's a look at what in development at the moment. Saturn owners can look forward to the release of a **Dragonball** beat-em-up similar to the Playstation game reviewed last month. Despite heavy criticism from nearly everyone but myself, the Playstation game was good and the Saturn's version shouldn't be too bad either. Also Saturn bound is Takara's **Toshinden**. Titled **Toshinden S** the game look virtually identical to the Playstation version and should play the same way too. Meanwhile, back on the Playstation, Takara has released screen shots for the forthcoming **Toshinden 2**. Looking better than the original with more detail on the characters and improved gameplay this should be a game too look out for. Capcom have surprised the universe again with the announcement of **Street Fighter 2 the (animated) Movie** for release on the Saturn, Playstation and the 3DO. Featuring graphics based on the excellent film and the inclusion of the monitor cyborg as a playable character this should prove that despite everything Capcom won't give up in a struggle. Back in the land of 16-bit, the Snes is still looking good with an interesting line of software coming to it. Squaresoft have announced the forthcoming release of **Front Mission : Gun Hazard** for the trusty Snes. Looking just as good as the prequel, **Gun Hazard's** designs were once again the work of Yoshitaka Amano and, with Square's track record, gameplay should be spot on. A review will definitely follow this games release. Also recently announced was a game based on the smart **IRIA** series. Unfortunately I seem to have misplaced the data for this as I can't seem to be able to find the manufacturer's name but the game was definitely a platformer and the graphics were not too impressive. Probably a case of good anime equals bad game. Lastly, most of the computer press have now mentioned **Secret of Mana 2**

ECTS SUMMER 95

**GAMES
CAPSULE**
by PAUL WATSON



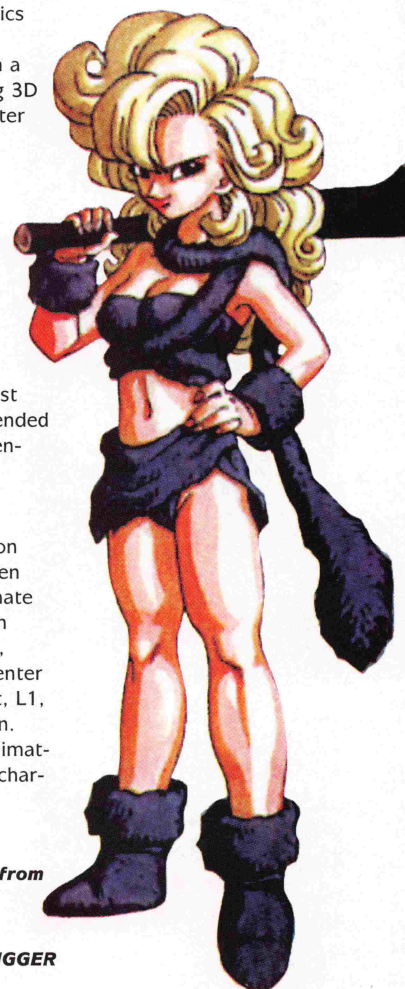
(Squaresoft) so I'll just confirm that it looks and sounds absolutely amazing. I managed to get a look at a playable demo last month and I was truly impressed. The graphics are gorgeously detailed and Flammie returns (this time with a turtle friend) for some stunning 3D sequences. More on this at a later date.

CHRONO TRIGGER HITS U.S.

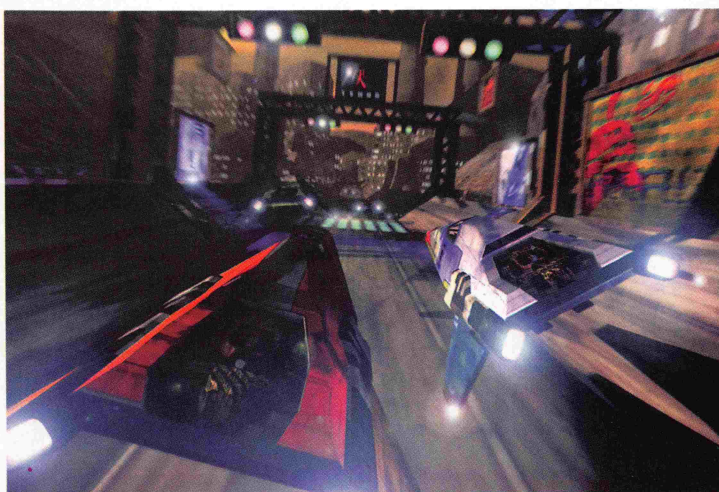
Squaresoft's excellent role-player **Chrono Trigger** has now been released in the states and import copies are now hitting UK stores. Featuring character designs by Akira Toriyama, Chrono is a must buy and is thoroughly recommended to fans of the genre (not to mention willing converts!).

ONE LAST BIT

Dragonball Z on the Playstation has a cheat to play as five hidden characters, making it into Ultimate Battle 27. To play as young Son Gokou, Kame Sennin, Mr Satan, Super Saiyajin and Gogita just enter Up, Triangle, Down, Cross, Left, L1, Right and R1 on the title screen. You even get to see another animated sequence showing the new characters!



Above left: DRAGON KNIGHT from Samurai.
Left: STREET FIGHTER 2's monitor cyborg
Right: Ayla from CHRONO TRIGGER
Below: Psygnosis's WIPEOUT



Julia Sertori's seen Adventure Duo right the way through, and wants to know, is it really...

THE ANIME FROM HELL?

Professor Masago has been having one of those days. You know the sort of thing, you're a mad scientist who can't get it up any more, your nymphomaniac wife welcomes the arrival of a gang of rapist soldiers, and then you're burned alive in the wreck of your laboratory. Fifty years later, the professor's avenging spirit is dug up with his anachronistic computer, and he tries to take it all out on the reincarnation of his wife. Trouble is, his wife's soul now inhabits the body of a nice 'average' schoolgirl, Midori. Luckily for Midori, she has nice 'average' schoolboy Norikazu to protect her, and the two of them are catapulted across time and space. After winding up in a proto-mythical dream-time, the Adventure Duo jump back to their own time with the help of some of its magical denizens, they destroy the professor in the past, only to discover that his rage has allowed him to survive. Love, you see, is not the only emotion that can defy the space-time continuum. Eventually they wipe the slate clean by transporting him back to the time of the Hiroshima bombing, and they all lived happily ever after. Except for the final episode, but

then again that's just one more loophole in a plot you could drive an aircraft carrier through.

If that synopsis sounded a bit too sensible, that's because I left out all of the gratuitous sex, and some of the sillier incongruities. To be frank, Adventure Duo is a mess from start to finish, but that in itself makes it interesting.

The British end of the production was a catalogue of disasters, beginning with the BBFC's insistence that the original Japanese title, Adventure Kid, would have to be removed in order to stop children buying it. The 18 certificate wasn't enough of a hint, then? Adventure Duo also marked the beginning of a new era in anime production, with Kiseki Films feeling obliged to point out that much of what originally made the anime interesting to its audience had been ripped out by the censor. Then there were problems on the dub itself, with one of the lead actors disappearing halfway

through. This resulted in the actor voicing Norikazu doubling up as the leader of the zombie soldiers in episode one and actually interrogating himself! Meanwhile, the jinx continued with the release, as large quantities of the subtitled version went out in the boxes marked for the dub. And if that wasn't bad enough, the pictures on the sleeves were downright misleading, with stills from episode three appearing on the back of episode two, and a cover shot on episode 2 that doesn't appear in the trilogy at all. Still, not to worry, because that only car-

ates every scene, and the arbitrary mix and match plot are so illogical as to become, literally, fantastic; Toshio Maeda's team have truly allowed their fantasies free reign, and the result is a Freudian treasure trove. The psychologist can often discern sexual underpinnings for the tropes in many films, but in Adventure Duo they are blatantly out in the open for all to see. It's only one small step from the girlish giggles of Devil-Hunter Yoko to Dakinien's sex magic, and when demon-girl Eganko moves in with Norikazu in episode three, there are

pornography, but it is also raw fantasy with all cultural inhibitions and limiters stripped away. To an even greater extent than Urotsukidoji itself, Adventure Duo is dominated by the erotic. And, like all dreams sexual or otherwise, it tails away as it recognises its own incongruities, finishing up with a final episode that is almost a playful spoof on its previous excesses.

Episode three, "The Love Potion" still retains the pornographic content of its predecessors, but this time it is bracketed by a school farce. The only vestige of the previous episodes is the presence of Eganko and 'Horny', and the faint possibility that school perve Yukimoto is the reincarnation of the soldier-rapist from WW2. Beneath the normal gasps and groans is a script packed with quips and asides, many of which mercilessly lampoon the excesses, not only of Adventure Duo 1 & 2, but also the Urotsukidoji series itself. There's even an obvious take on Faust, in the form of Mephisto, who leaps into the human world only to discover that he's forgotten about the exchange rate. "The Love Potion" reprises the events of the rest of the story, but

on the level of a teenage romance, with the fantastical (again) love potions, the farcical mix-up over who gets which one, and Yukimoto's downfall, when his dastardly plans misfire in public. All it lacks is a big chase straight out of the Benny Hill Show, for the audience to realise that playtime is



ries on the tradition started by the Japanese release. It too contained pictures from scenes that did not appear in the final version, including one of a betentacled Midori with nipple clamps and electrodes, that never would have made it past customs, let alone onto the shelves of the UK video stores.

But, when all is said and done, Adventure Duo still has some amazing elements. There's the interrogation scene in episode one, which loses its innovation in an English dub, in which the characters speak in broken English with Japanese subtitles. The sexuality that perme-

ates every scene, and the arbitrary mix and match plot are so illogical as to become, literally, fantastic; Toshio Maeda's team have truly allowed their fantasies free reign, and the result is a Freudian treasure trove. The psychologist can often discern sexual underpinnings for the tropes in many films, but in Adventure Duo they are blatantly out in the open for all to see. It's only one small step from the girlish giggles of Devil-Hunter Yoko to Dakinien's sex magic, and when demon-girl Eganko moves in with Norikazu in episode three, there are

startling, yet openly sexual overtones of the Lum/Ataru/Shinobu love triangle. For those who would like an example from mainstream American films, Eganko's method of spell-casting is exactly that which is implied, but not revealed, in the keymaster/gatekeeper scene in Ghostbusters.

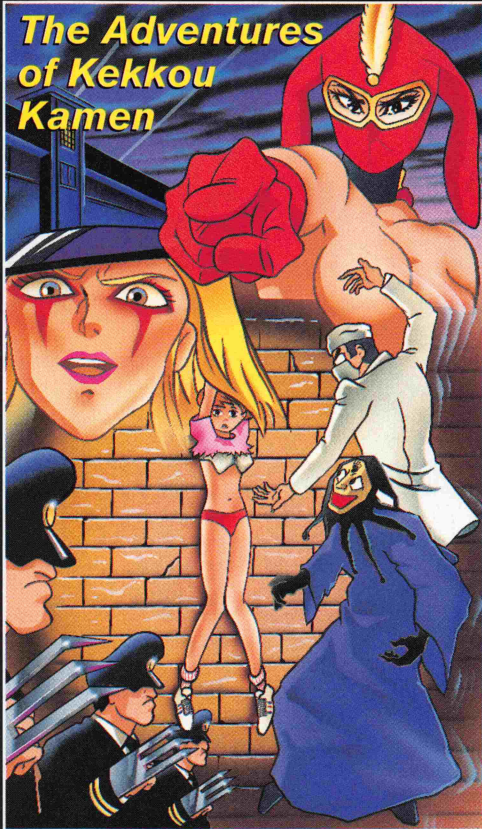
over and they have to get back to the real world.

Adventure Duo will never be rated as one of the best anime, in fact it is probably one of the worst. It never pretends to be anything other than what it is, a mindless soft-core pornographic cartoon. But it is also so honest in its perversity, and so blatant with its obscenity that it can serve to highlight many of the undertones that may lie, unnoticed behind many of the other shows that first appear to be so innocent...



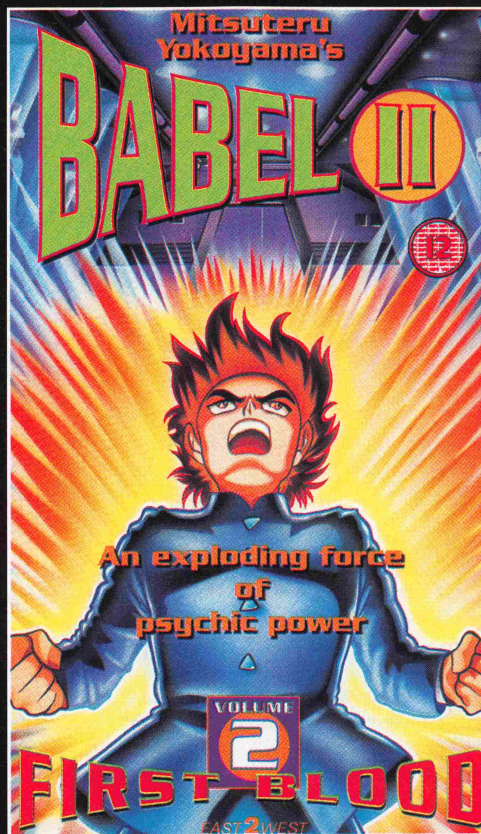
SEX AND VIOLENCE GUARANTEED!

The Adventures
of Kekkou
Kamen



OUT
NOW
ON
VIDEO

The Return
of Kekkou
Kamen

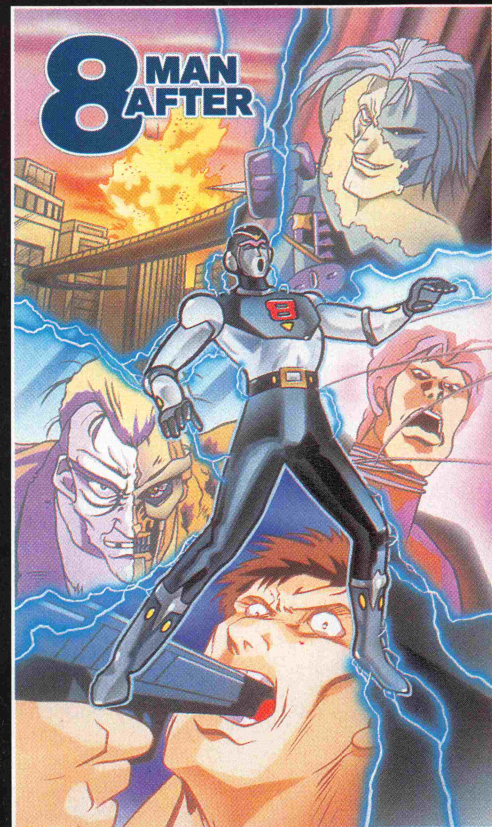


EAST2WEST
FILMS

18

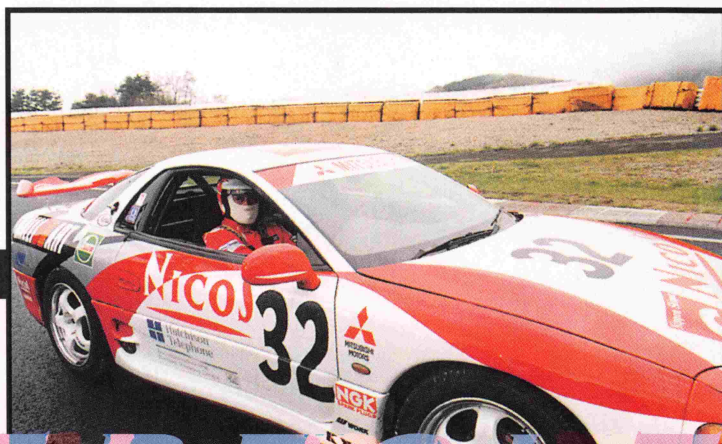
"City
in Fear"

"End
Run"



《霹靂火》

THUNDERBOLT



A pretty quiet month in the live-action world, so I thought that this month I'd take a look at the current fortunes of Jackie Chan, who's probably the biggest box-office star in East Asia.

Right now, he seems to be on a roll, and could be heading for a major breakthrough into the American market, as New Line Pictures and Miramax have bought the theatrical rights to some of his recent movies, including "Rumble in the Bronx" and "Drunken Master 2". In this country, we've slowly been catching up his backlog - last time out, I talked about 'Police Story 3' and 'Crime Story' getting a video release in Britain.

However, his latest, "Thunderbolt", has now appeared in Hong Kong, and is worth some examination, as it is the most expensive movie ever made in Hong Kong. This is thanks mostly to the subject matter: it's about motor racing, and the driving sequences, mostly shot in Japan, were responsible for about half the total cost of the picture, due to the 900 crew members used in their production. Despite this, we're still only talking somewhere around eight million pounds: my calculations suggest this would pay for

less than 10 minutes of "Waterworld"...

The story starts off in a Japanese car factory - fans will not be surprised to hear it's the Mitsubishi plant, given his long-time association with them! Jackie plays a test driver and innovator, who is fired after setting up a secret midnight testing session. Returning to Hong Kong, he joins the police and is assigned to investigate illegal car-racing, now a major problem in the colony, because of the betting associated with it. The mastermind behind them challenges Jackie to a contest, and they arrange it for the forthcoming race in Japan. Of course, being a bad guy, he's not going to rely on luck, and Jackie's going to need all his skills to handle things...

With such a complicated and expensive production, Jackie called upon some high-powered assistance; including him, there were no less than FOUR directors credited, with a fifth (Stanley Tong, who did both Supercop and Rumble in the Bronx) also helping out anonymously. Top billing went to Gordon Chan, who's hardly known in the West, but had several big Hong Kong hits working with comic Steven Chow Sing-Chi.

Working alongside "martial arts director" Jackie Chan, was "action director" Samo Hung, the first time in a long while the pair have worked together. It'll certainly please many people to see them back together again, as there have rumours of a feud between them.

The car-racing scene were mostly the responsibility of Frankie Chan, no mean director in his own right, having helmed classic car-thief movie, "The Outlaw Brothers", with Yukari Oshima. He had to cope with some major problems: the Nishi Sendai track in Japan had just been resurfaced, and so the crew had full liability for any structural damage they caused. Fortunately, there was no such catastrophe. There was, however, plenty of damage to cars (both intentional and otherwise), with more than HK\$20 million spent on buying vehicles.

Even Jackie was distracted during filming, taking three days out to collect a Lifetime Achievement Award presented to Chan by Quentin Tarantino as part of the annual MTV Movie Awards. It was a shame MTV chose "Kung Fu Fighting" as the music behind the accompanying montage of clips from his movies, but hey, if you want imagination, who watches MTV?

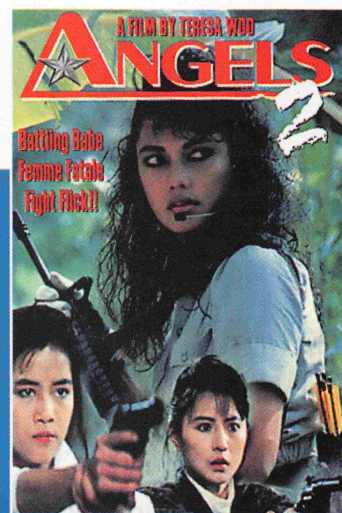
The film opened in Hong Kong at the start of August, and started off in winning form, with the biggest opening of the year to date. However, although it soon became the #2 grossing film of 1995 (behind "Rumble in the Bronx", Jackie's New Year offering), just two weeks later, its position was usurped by "Sixty Million Dollar Man", a new film from the previously mentioned Steven Chow Sing-Chi which took the crown with a new record first week gross of HK\$2.1m. While this may seem disappointing, as "Thunderbolt" had yet to recoup more than a fraction of its costs, Hong Kong represents only a tiny fraction of the receipts for a Jackie Chan film. He may be neck and neck for the local box-office, but his work travels far better than the zany style of his comic rival.

Chan has already moved on, and is now filming a movie called "CIA", expected to be part four in the Police Story series. The man seems to have boundless energy, and it's certainly hard to think of anyone who is more deserving of the Western success which has so far eluded him, but which may now be just around the corner.



LIVE & KICKING

Just time to give a swift mention to "Angels 2" - aka "Angel 2", aka "Iron Angels 2"! - which is just out from Missing in Action. If you enjoyed the first one, and I certainly did, this will be right up your street. Though there's no Yukari Oshima this time, it's a very similar mix of guns 'n' fu, this time with Moon Lee and Co. trying to thwart a villain keen to take over Malaysia. The copy I was sent was widescreen, but had a truly muddy soundtrack: your mileage may vary...



INCOMING

NOVEMBER 1995

Manga and anime releases in November, with comments from a top industry source

MANGA

ACADEMY COMICS LTD

ROBOTECH SENTINELS 'WINTER WONDERLAND' SWIMSUIT SPECIAL ~1

ROBOTECH II : SENTINELS BOOK IV #0

ROBOTECH : RETURN TO MACROSS #26

ROBOTECH : EXCALIBUR #1 (A MACROSS MISSIONS ADVENTURE)

A.M. WORKS

A new company publishing manga influenced titles, though not actually based on any existing creations. Could be worth a look?

ATHENA #1 by Dean Hsieh : the adventures of an unemployed goddess who plays in an incompetent rock band!

PERVERT CLUB #1 by Will Allison : A light hearted sex comedy...

DANGER GIRLS by Troutt and Lane : Two beautiful babes in tiny bikinis who happen to be paranormal exterminators!

ANTARCTIC PRESS

This company specialise in 'dojinshi', or non-professional fan manga. A selection of interesting and unusual titles are available.

F-III BANDIT by Ippongi Bang.

FANTASTIC PANIC VOL 2 #1 by Satoru Yamasaki : Nee wanted nothing more than to be a hero - but having lost the magical dagger that gave him the courage, he has to embark on a perilous quest to reclaim it.

HURRICANE GIRLS #3 by Hiroshi Yakumo : Supernatural beasts and mystical warriors clash in this action-packed series.

SILBUSTER #12 by Ikkou Shahara.

MANGAZINE #41 : This issue examines the American 'remake' of yet another anime show, SAMURAI TROOPERS, debuting in the States as RONIN WARRIORS.

VAMPIRE MIYU #2 by Narumi Kakinouchi.

NINJA HIGH SCHOOL #49 by Marshall and Lunsford.

SMALL BODIED NINJA HIGH SCHOOL #7 by Tyrone Ford : The popular SD spinoff from NHS features an invasion by space mice - just what you'd expect!

BLOOMSBURY

ATTACK OF THE BLACK FLAME

and **BLIND FURY** by Takeshi Maekawa : volumes 5 & 6 of the surprise success of '95, the IRON FIST CHINMI series.

CPM COMICS

CYBER CITY : PART TWO #2 by Tim Eldred and Studio Go!

PROJECT A-KO 2 by Eldred, Ott and Studio Go!

DAIKAIJU ENTERPRISES

G-FAN #18 : First pictures of what could be the last GODZILLA movie, 'Godzilla Vs. Destroyer', plus all the

other Godzilla news that's fit to print!

DARK HORSE COMICS

You can always be assured of quality releases from this company, and a diverse selection of titles that don't rely on violence to entertain!

OH! MY GODDESS PART 3 #1 by Kosuke Fujishima : Keiichi is an ordinary college student who happens to have a goddess living with him - which often leads to a lot more trouble than you'd think!

GUN SMITH CATS #7 by Kenichi Sonoda : More tales of gals, guns and high explosives. **Recommended.**

DIRTY PAIR : FATAL BUT NOT SERIOUS # 5 by Warren and Story : The cosmic carnage continues as the Egawa solar system - host to Dirty Pair Con '41 - counts down to Super Nova!

GODZILLA #6 by Stradley etc.

LEGEND OF MOTHER SARAH #8 by Otomo and Nagayasu.

Recommended.

3 X 3 EYES #2 by Yuzo Takada.

GHOST IN THE SHELL COLLECTION by Masamune Shirow : A 352 page collection of the cyberpunk masterpiece, featuring the original colour pages.

EROS COMICS

This company occasionally releases Japanese erotic comics, but bear in mind, this is very much a 'Mature Readers' publisher and there are no guarantees you'll be able to find them in your local comic shops.

COUNTDOWN : SEX BOMBS #1 by Hiroyuki Uatane.

PRINCESS OF DARKNESS #3 by Yuichiro Tanuma.

GRAPHIC VISIONS

A relatively new company, they tend to specialise in more 'adult' manga and U.S. adaptations of anime.

DRAGON PINK VOL 1 #2 by Itoyoko
MAGICAL TWILIGHT VOL 1 #4 by Yuuki.

MANGA PUBLISHING

MANGA MANIA #29 by various : News, reviews and manga serials.

CRYING FREEMAN VOL 2 by Koike and Ikegami.

DIRTY PAIR : DANGEROUS ACQUAINTANCES by Smith & Warren

MANGAJIN

MANGAJIN #51 : The Japanese language learning magazine, which uses popular manga strips to teach Japanese.

MARVEL COMICS

AKIRA #37 by Katsuhiro Otomo.
Highly recommended.

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

This company are not afraid to take chances, with offerings ranging from shōjo (girls) manga to political manga light hearted comedy and more.

MAISON IKKOKU PART 45 #1 by Rumiko Takahashi : Yusaku's meddling grandmother attempts to fix him up with Kyoko, but as always, the course of true love never does run smooth!

MANGA VIZION VOL 1 #9 : More assorted manga tales in this successful

anthology book, with work by Takahashi, Hagio, Ikegami and Kusunoki.
RIOT #2 by Satoshi Shiki.

ADOLF VOL 1. by Osamu Tezuka : A tale set during World War II of three men named Adolf - one of whom is the German dictator - whose lives become inextricably entwined.

BIO BOOSTER ARMOUR GUYVER PART 4 #1 by Yoshiki Takaya.

FIST OF THE NORTH STAR PART 2 #1 by Buronson and Hara : The return of the post apocalyptic tale of Ken, the feared Fist of the North Star, and his battles to protect humanity from the evil forces that would enslave it.

NAUSICAA PART 5 #5 by Hayao Miyazaki. **Recommended.**

BIO BOOSTER ARMOUR GUYVER : DARK MASTERS GRAPHIC NOVEL by Yoshiki Takaya : The third GUYVER graphic novel collects all of Part 2 into one volume.

MAI THE PSYCHIC GIRL PERFECT COLLECTION VOL 2 by Kudo and Ikegami.

RETURN OF LUM PART 2 #4 by Rumiko Takahashi : Lum's childhood friend Ran is still after revenge - and just imagine what horrifying schemes she cooks up!

SANCTUARY PART 4 #4 by Fumimura and Ikegami.

ANIMERICA VOL 3 #11 : all the latest anime/manga news, strips and reviews.

BATTLE ANGEL ALITA PART 5 #5 by Yukito Kishiro.

RANMA 1/2 PART 4 #11 by Rumiko Takahashi. **Recommended.**

ANIME: US RELEASES

AD VISION

MIGHTY SPACE MINERS Dubbed/Subtitled.

CUTEY HONEY VOL 3 subtitled : Two all new episodes featuring the escapades of the fab female shape-changing superheroine!

ANIMEIGO

AD POLICE FILES 1, 2 and 3 Dubbed

MANGA ENTERTAINMENT

ANGEL COP VOL 5 Dubbed : The army closes in on the last few members of the anti-terrorist organisation betrayed by their own government in this explosive series.

GIANT ROBO VOL 5 Dubbed.
Recommended.

MACROSS PLUS VOL 4 Dubbed/Subtitled : The dramatic conclusion of one of this year's most highly acclaimed anime series.

PATLABOR II Dubbed/Subtitled.

PIONEER

EL HAZARD EPISODE 2 Dubbed/Subtitled.

HAKKENDEN VOL 2 AND 3 Dubbed/Subtitled.

TENCHI MUYO! THE MAGICAL GIRL PRETTY SAMMY Dubbed/Subtitled : Tsunami is nominated as the queen of the mystical realm of Juraiheim.

SOFTCEL PICTURES

MAGICAL TWILIGHT VOL 2 Subtitled : Available in General and Uncut versions.

NEW ANGEL VOL 2 Subtitled : available in General and Uncut versions. NB : mature viewers only!

SOFTWARE SCULPTORS

ZENKI EPISODES 4 & 5 Subtitled : Yet another 'shrine kid releases ancient

demon' story, in the same vein as USHIO & TORA, TENCHI, etc - fast and funny, with a very *kawaii* demon.

STREAMLINE

ROBOTECH PERFECT COLLECTION VOL 7 Dubbed.

MACROSS Dubbed.

SOUTHERN CROSS Dubbed.

MOSPEADA Dubbed.

ROBOTECH PERFECT SOUNDTRACK DOUBLE CD.

US MANGA CORPS

CYBER CITY OEDO 808 DATA 3

Subtitled : The original Japanese soundtrack and voice artists in a beautiful vampire romance. **Recommended.**
RECORD OF LODOSS WAR VOL 5-6 Subtitled. Epic D & D Fantasy. **Highly Recommended.**

RECORD OF LODOSS WAR GIFT BOX Subtitled : All six volumes in one attractive gift box.

VIZ COMMUNICATIONS

RANMA 1/2 : THE EVIL AWAKES Dubbed : The video debut of Happosai, the incredibly powerful yet incredibly perverted martial arts master! **Recommended.**

RANMA 1/2 : DESPERATELY SEEKING SHAMPOO LASER DISC Dubbed/Subtitled

RANMA 1/2 COLLECTORS' EDITION VOL 6 Subtitled. Also available from VIZ this month is a selection of Ranma merchandise, which includes the Ranma '96 calendar, the Ranma Personal Organizer and the Ranma screensaver!

VOYAGER VIDEO

FINAL YAMATO Subtitled.

ANIME: UK RELEASES

Releases subject to BBFC certification

ANIME PROJECTS

URUSEI YATSURA TV SERIES VOL 8 Subtitled : Lum, Ataru and the gang in romantic comedy mayhem.

BUBBLE GUM CRISIS VOL 7 Dubbed

EAST2WEST

BABEL II VOL 2 (30 Oct) and 3 : Further adventures of Koichi and his psychic friends and foes.

KISEKI

THE COCKPIT Subtitled : Leiji Matsumoto's acclaimed tales of war and heroism. **Recommended.**
SOL BIANCA VOL 1 Subtitled : Five girl pirates, a sentient ship and a fabulous treasure.

MANGA ENTERTAINMENT

PATLABOR II Dubbed : The return of the longrunning and popular Patlabor series in its second movie. It is 3 years on from the events of Patlabor I, and once more the giant robots must be mobilised to save the city from destruction. **Recommended.**
PATLABOR I & II TWO-PACK. Dubbed.

PROJECT A-KO VOL 4 Dubbed : Schoolgirl shenanigans abound in this instalment of the ongoing battle for the affections of C-Ko!

CYBERPUNK COLLECTION BOXED SET

WESTERN CONNECTION

Still no announcement of forthcoming releases as we go to press!

PIONEER

No further releases are planned until early 1996.



**MANGA
SCAN**

VANITY ANGEL

6 issue series, issue 1 Sept 1994-
issue 6 Feb 1995. B/W. Story and art :
Kaori Asano. Antarctic Press, \$3.50
(issues 1 & 2),
\$2.95 (issues 3-6), US.

Vanity Angel is one of a number of titles under Antarctic's 'adults only' label, Venus Comics. Most, though not all, are erotica, and as such they invite dismissal or damnation from certain quarters. Those with a moral objection to pornography will see them as yet another attempt to corrupt the innocent through a medium they feel is solely intended for children. No surprise there. But many who are comfortable with 'real' pornography dismiss erotic comics (or animation for that matter) because 'it's just drawings'.

This always seems odd to me. Mankind has produced erotic art since the dawn of time and most people don't doubt its power to affect us - the erotic charge from artwork is different from that of 'real life', but if the artist is doing his job right and pushing the right buttons, then it's no less powerful.

Comics are just as viable as any other medium as a source for stimulation.

Most of us would agree that a well-crafted comic can move us - make us happy, sad or angry - so why not randy as well? Of course, being a narrative form, it begs the same questions as porno films - for example, is it worth having a plot, characterisation and

good writing if all you're trying to give the punter is a little excitement? Well, like film, I think there's room for all types. As long as it's well done, who cares?

But enough of this pretentious waffle! What about *Vanity Angel*? Looking over the Venus range, this is one of the softer titles; being a manga it has a degree of self-censorship imposed by the artist to conform with Japanese obscenity laws, unlike most of the American titles in which anything goes (or comes, for that matter!) It has what many of these titles lack - a story on which to hang its not infrequent scenes of entwined bodies; no literary masterpiece, you understand, but a light-hearted, good-natured fantasy with a generous sprinkling of wit and plenty of feelgood factor. A definite plus in such a guilt-laden area of publishing!

Melon and Non are two virtually identical, bisexual and improbably built Japanese college girls who frequently indulge in page after page of interesting ... er ... mutual relaxation techniques, to cope with the pressures of modern school life. Non has a boyfriend. Melon has the unrequited hots for senior student Mr. Yajima. When he's within a 400 metre radius, her heart beats fit to burst out of her not inconsiderable bosom and she has an alarming tendency to orgasm so violently as to cause Godzilla-scale destruction in the surrounding area. Indeed, so powerful is her libido that in issue 3 it ruptures the very fabric of time and hurls Melon and Non back 130 years into the past of feudal Japan. At first the girls are thrilled ("Cool!! I'm like that guy on *Quantum Leap*!!



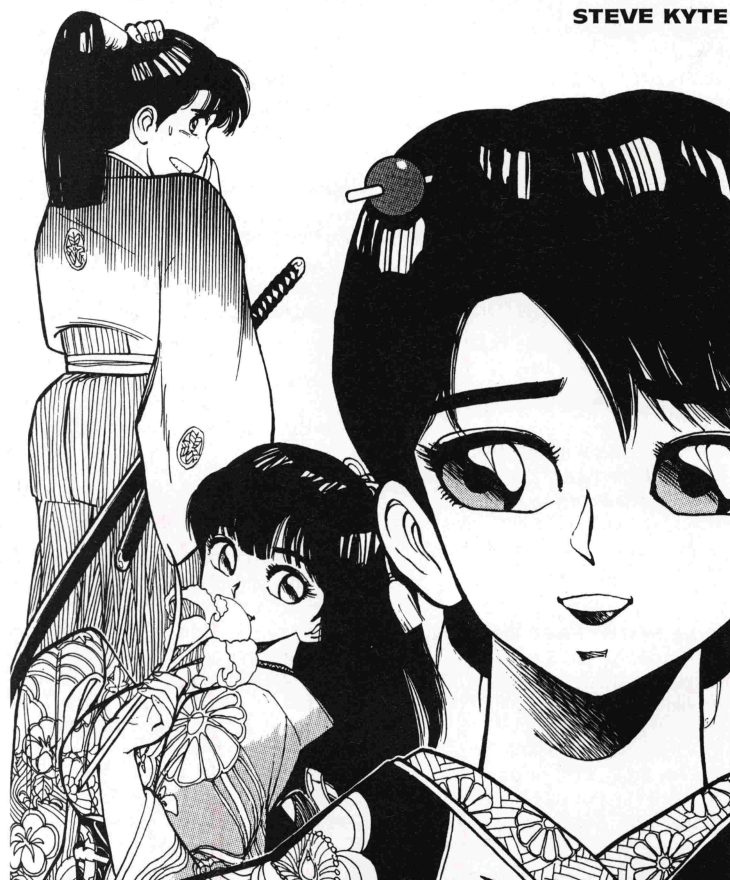
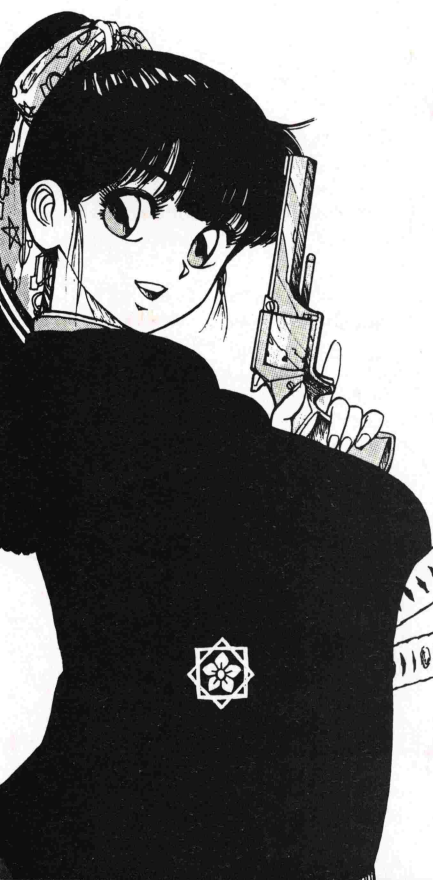
Oh boy!!") but then comes the realisation : how do they get home again without Mr. Yajima to make the earth move for Melon?

Kaori Asano (one of the few female names on the Venus roster) has produced a beautifully drawn comic that comes across as a bizarre medley of *Emmanuelle*, *Quantum Leap*, Warner Brothers cartoons and a Cary Grant romantic comedy. Having said that, as with so many manga I find the title curiously irrelevant. At least with *Bondage Fairies* you knew what you were getting!

Full marks to Antarctic's Kuni Kimura for providing copious notes to aid us ignorant gaijin on the finer historical points in the second half of the story.

So there you go - it's educational as well! What more do you want?

STEVE KYTE



MANGASCAN JAPAN

In the first of a new series looking at typical Japanese comics as yet untranslated into English, Jonathan Clements reviews one of the recent works of a popular shojo artist.

It is winter 1995, and Yuri Suzuki is a fifteen year old school-girl who's just stolen her first kiss from long-time classmate Himuro. But as Yuri starts to cross the threshold into womanhood, strange things start to happen. She becomes menaced by, of all things, bodies of water. To her troubled mind, fish tanks appear to attack her, and her bathwater tries to drag her down. Eventually, just after a secret tryst with Himuro, she steps into a puddle that whisks her away to a completely different world.

Yuri finds herself in a desert region where the sun blazes high in the sky, and where the strangely-attired inhabitants speak to her in cuneiform. Although it takes her a while to find out, the reader is quickly informed that she is in ancient Anatolia, in the capital city of the Hittite Empire. She has been summoned by magic in order to save the life of the youngest princelings of the realm, which she

must do by bleeding to death: the *Red River* of the title. She is saved from sacrifice by the princeling Kyle, but he has other plans for her, and her troubles are only just beginning.

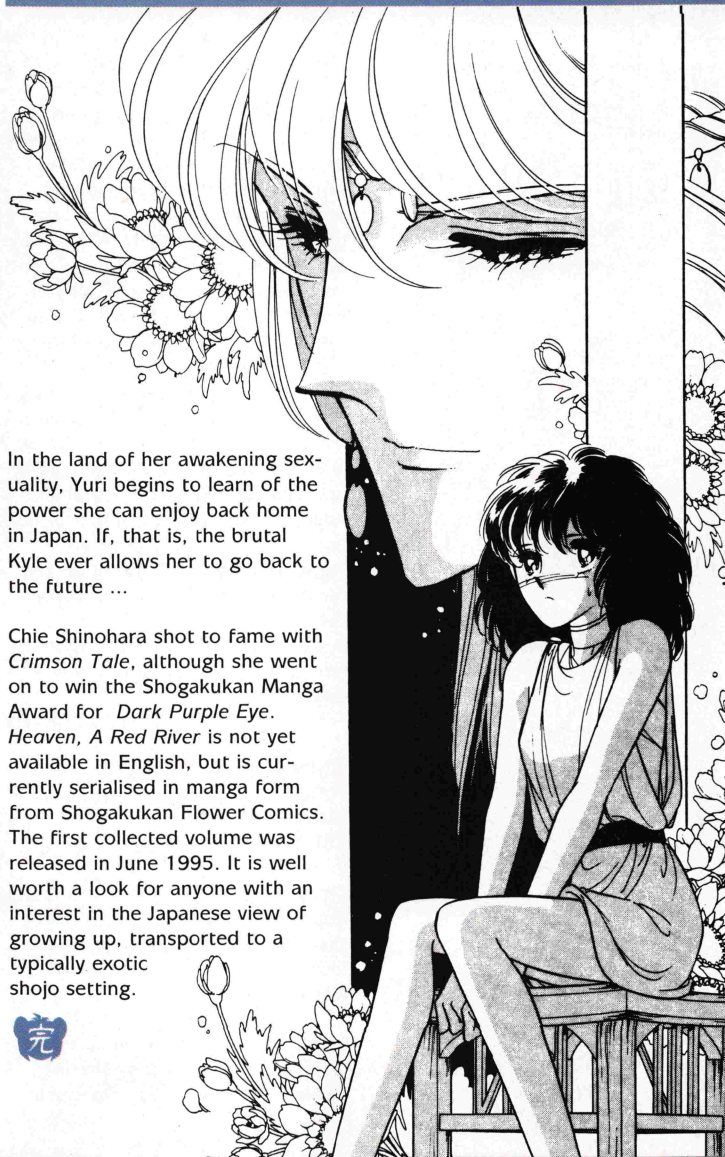
Shinohara's manga has deliberately plumped for an unorthodox setting; there are few works on the Hittites, and her portrayal of their empire borrows colours from the very Western palette of Orientalism. Kyle is a barbaric sheikh, who ravages our civilised heroine in his seraglio, and although she cries out for the safe comforts of home and Himuro, she secretly yearns for his mad passion. There are more subtle psychological cues in *A Red River* which have their roots in Yuri's passage through puberty. The manga begins in the safe cocoon of home, but Yuri's encounters with Himuro gradually lead her into the adult world of sexual relations. As she seals her association with Himuro, she is dragged completely from the world that reared her, and familiar objects from the past become threatening. She is befriended by a slave, Teat, who is the spitting image of her sister, but who turns out to be her most dangerous enemy. Ancient Anatolia may be a savage world, but it can be more forgiving than modern Japan towards pubescent girls.



HEAVEN, A RED RIVER

Collected Volume 1 ISBN 4-09-136501-9.

June 1995 B/W. Story and Art: Chie Shinohara, Shogakukan, ¥390



In the land of her awakening sexuality, Yuri begins to learn of the power she can enjoy back home in Japan. If, that is, the brutal Kyle ever allows her to go back to the future ...

Chie Shinohara shot to fame with *Crimson Tale*, although she went on to win the Shogakukan Manga Award for *Dark Purple Eye*. *Heaven, A Red River* is not yet available in English, but is currently serialised in manga form from Shogakukan Flower Comics. The first collected volume was released in June 1995. It is well worth a look for anyone with an interest in the Japanese view of growing up, transported to a typically exotic shojo setting.





VIDEO SCAN

U.K. RELEASES

MADOX-01

Manga Video, MANV 1098, cert PG, 41 mins approx, English dubbed

This OAV comes with an excellent pedigree - Shinji Aramaki directs his own concept, and AIC and Armic are the driving forces in the production. It was one of the first OAVs I saw, and the AnimEigo subtitled version has been available to US fans for some years; the dubbed release gives British otaku a chance to see it too. It's a charming, lightweight but very enjoyable comic romp through downtown Tokyo that sets out to show what would happen if an ordinary high school boy really **did** get into the cockpit of a hightech mobile suit. The result is not the one usually portrayed in mecha shows; Koji just grits his teeth and does his utmost to survive as a psychotic lieutenant with a grudge against the machine that defeated him sets himself to take out the prototype Madox-01 suit by any means possible. And while its designer frets at the possibility of damage to her beloved mech, Koji has worries of his own; he's due to meet his former girlfriend in Shinjuku that evening, and if he's late for their date she'll never give him another chance. There's lots of destruction but nobody's seriously hurt (unless you count Lieutenant Kilgore's ego), and the mix of action and humour is just about right. Those who have to have either tentacles or fluffy creatures to make them happy will be disappointed, but otherwise there's nothing much wrong with this cautionary wish-fulfilment tale.

HELEN MCCARTHY

ANGEL COP PART 6

Manga Video, MANV 1104
25mins approx. Cert 18

I may be mistaken, but I think Angel Cop 6 is about five minutes longer than the previous five segments. Either that, or my video slips on fast-forward...

To recap, Angel and Asura are still in the process of beating up on Lucifer, until she does a disappear-

ing act and leaves the two of them with barmy professor Tachihara and a severely run-down Raiden. While Angels slaps a couple more Duracells into the slumbering cyborg, Lucifer heads for the generator room and plugs herself into the mains.

Taki shoots his way into the Tokyo government tower and confronts the bad guys, but as usual forgets everything he was ever taught in basic police training and gets himself shot by a gunman who can't tell an Ingram from an Uzi. Dosed up to the eyeballs on truth serum, he does his best to talk the conspirators to death, but in the final reel it is up to Angel to save the day, deliver a few telling homilies, and ride off into the sunset.

As with so many series of this size and shape (Dominion, for example), the last part of Angel Cop is a bit of a disappointment. All the tension and thoughtless energy of part 5 seems to evaporate in a cloud of waffle and talking heads, desperately trying to tie up the remaining plot threads. A few surprises are sprung, but no particularly memorable ones. Even the climactic fight sequences are stilted and slow.

It's a shame, but there you go: Angel Cop bows out with a poorly-directed whimper and nowhere near enough bangs.

P. J. EVANS

STREET FIGHTER 2 THE ANIMATED MOVIE

This movie represents almost a full circle - a computer game with characters drawn in an anime style has finally, by way of a manga and a live-action film, been made into anime itself. Not an easy task, when the game consisted entirely of two people hitting each other.

The plot, where it can be discerned, concerns the jack-booted mastermind Bison, who is brainwashing top pugilists and turning them into agents for his Shadowlaw organisation. On the side of the angels are Interpol, represented by Chun-Li; the American military in the oddly-haired form of Captain Guile; and a couple of mavericks called Ryu and Ken. These last two trained together in Japan and grew to share a bond of trust, a bad sense of humour and improbable eyebrows. Eventually they went their separate ways: Ryu chose to wander the world with no shoes and only a set of judo whites to his name, while Ken got himself a Porsche, a pretty girlfriend and some very nasty shorts. One of these men smiles a lot. Can you guess which one?

While some of the scenes in far-off lands are nicely done (especially Calcutta), and the fight sequences

are certainly competent, probably the best thing about this film is the soundtrack. Shedding the original Japanese music, Cory Lerios and John D'Andrea have come up with a stonking collection of ditties ranging from Slash-wannabe guitar work to 3x3 Eyes-style synthesised ethnicity. If they ever bring a soundtrack album out, it'll get played a lot more than the video.

In conclusion, Street Fighter 2 does what it sets out to do, which is bring a computer game to the screen. In fact, it captures the spirit of the game very well - it's colourful, loud and gets boring after about thirty minutes.

STREET FIGHTER 2 - THE T-SHIRT

Bundled with my review copy of the film came what is ostensibly a T-shirt but is actually some free advertising for Manga Video. As T-shirts go, this one went: it's white, XL size, and of middling quality, with a slightly blurry SF2 logo on the front and a crackly label in the collar. Guaranteed to fade slightly in the wash and reduce the wearer's credibility to zero.

P. J. EVANS

ORGUSS 02 VOLUME 3

Manga Video, MANV 1105
60 mins approx, Cert 12

So far, Orguss 02 has been one of the best anime series to come from Manga Video for a good while. The question is, will it keep up the quality until the closing reel, or do an Angel Cop and hit the skids in the last episode?

Rescued by the mysterious Colonel, Lean and his tentacled friend Nataruma are spirited away in the Orguss, while the enormous Zafrin decimator clomps its way into Ravilian territory. The Ravilian royal family undergoes another change of leadership in a particularly nasty (but inevitable) way, and the new King sets about protecting his precious flower gardens with a new and even bigger chunk of machinery.

Meanwhile, in the Colonel's tower, Lean learns the origin of the decimators and of Nataruma, and realises that the two are inextricably linked: a third dimensional bomb must be detonated to rectify the spatial rifts caused by the first two, but it won't go off while the new decimator is still on the prowl. It's up to Lean to take on the mountain-sized mecha using just the Orguss and its last six missiles - while blindfolded!

A couple of minor niggles aside, Orguss 02 handles its finale quite

admirably. Some of the final confrontations are resolved a little too easily - if the Libo decimator was designed to be the ultimate weapon, what was the Orguss (which deletes it within five shots) designed as? Nevertheless, the animation, characters, and pace remain as close to form as can be expected; there are some excellent special effects (shockwaves from explosions, the play of light and shadow, the stunningly-handled nuke attack near the church), and all in all the story rounds itself off nicely. Probably the best series to emerge from Manga this year.

P.J. EVANS

PROJECT A-KO 4 : FINAL

Manga Video, MANV 1107, Cert 12, 45 mins approx, English dubbed

And so the A-Ko experience comes to a 'Final' (ahem) conclusion, after three OAV adventures featuring the kinetic schoolgirl trio A-Ko, B-Ko and C-Ko. We've seen them stave off an alien invasion and make peace, stop a plunderous raid on extraterrestrial technology, fall in (and out) of love with a cute guy, and now the circle is complete. Now, in PROJECT A-KO 4 : FINAL, the last chapter in the Graviton City saga, we see them stave off an alien invasion and fall in (and out) of love with a cute guy. I guess two out of three isn't bad.

The first PROJECT A-KO movie is without doubt one of the best and most oft-recommended titles around, still holding its own as a fast and funny adventure after nearly a decade; but, like a lot of good stories, it's been flogged to death by its sequels and succumbed to the law of diminishing returns. While FINAL looks just fine and the voice-acting is good (as it is in most US Manga Corps dubs, repackaged here by Manga Video for a UK release), the story is a retread of the first movie with a few elements from PROJECT A-KO 3 : CINDERELLA RHAPSODY slapped on, and a rather telegraphed 'gag' conclusion. There are some neat parody moments, my favourite being the totally needless introduction of the giant robot A-Ko in scenes reminiscent of VOLTRON, GATCHAMAN and countless *sentai* series, but by and large the saga has run out of steam at this stage, and it shows. All the usual fight scenes and mushy sentiments are here - FINAL is quite clearly by the numbers, as character designer and A-KO 1 and 3 scriptwriter Yuji Morioka borrows heavily from his earlier works. FINAL is a bit of a damp squib on which to end so cool a concept, but in hindsight the changeover of the characters to the later A-KO THE VERSUS version couldn't have come at a better time. In conclusion, this is one for com-

pletists and collectors.

JIM SWALLOW

BABEL II VOL 1, THE BEGINNING

East2West Films, E2W1005, cert 15, 30 mins approx, English dubbed

This tape has the first episode of the four-part OAV series based on Mitsuteru Yokoyama's classic manga. The sci-fi adventure story is fine, if a bit dated, but the execution is really weak. The animation is OK but nothing exciting, despite lots of explosions and fight sequences which should have given the crew something to really get their teeth into, and the character designs by the renowned Shingo Araki are just like his work in series like SAINT SEIYA; obviously nobody's told him that pretty boys with gravity-defying hair are no longer the fashion. When faced with the contemporary, hard-edged character design of series like SLAM DUNK Araki's stylised ciphers look redundant. It's hard to believe this OAV was made four years after AKIRA, and that isn't just because of the technique; although the story is a classic, it's not given any new twists to bring it up to date. The Western contributions - the dubbing and the new music track - are both good-quality work. On reflection it's probably an essential buy for Araki completists and sf aficionados, but it doesn't have that bit of oomph that's needed to make waves in the mainstream market.

RORY DONNELLY

BABEL II VOL 2, FIRST BLOOD

East2West Films, E2W1006, cert 15 (TBC), 30 mins approx, English dubbed

Episode 2 of this OAV series sees the action pick up some pace after a lacklustre first episode. The psychic fight sequences get faster and more frequent, and the psychology of the characters is gone into in a bit more detail. We see Koichi coming to terms with the changes in his life and discovering some of the secrets of his new home, the ancient Tower of Babel, with its alien technology. But the sinister Master Yomi and his henchmen aren't letting Koichi go without a fight; if he won't join them, the Master decides the young psychic must be killed. Using the walker mech Barak (a really nice design) the bad guys penetrate the Tower with ease, and the Master recalls that he too was once called to this place, as 'Babel I'. So why did the Tower reject him, and will it now protect Babel II? A battle between the two Babels is inevitable. The music, written for the Western release by David Tolley, works well to emphasise the action here, and I found myself enjoying the final battle sequence while won-

dering if I would have bothered to give this tape a look if I didn't have to review it, given that the first episode was so much less interesting. I'd started to change my mind about this story by the end of Part 2; I still think the first tape lacks that bit of oomph to make waves, but the second has more to it.

RORY DONNELLY.

SUPER DEFORMED DOUBLE FEATURE

Anime Projects, AP095-014, 67 mins approx, Cert PG(TBC), English subtitled

If you like *kawaii*, you'll probably love this. If Japanese cute is a bit too cute for your taste, don't dismiss it out of hand. SD versions have a habit of twisting the cuteness of their little characters in more or less subtle ways that can be a lot of fun. This double-bill consists of TEN LITTLE GALL FORCE and SCRAMBLE WARS, and had its UK premiere at AUKcon in 1994 to considerable audience acclaim. TLGF is a spoof on the 'making of' videos so popular with film-makers the world over; the SD incarnations of the GALL FORCE charas and crew come together to make a video, and their relationships both fictional and real are mercilessly gayed. The crew, by the way, are takeoffs on the real people involved - see Kenichi Sonoda in SD form!

SCRAMBLE WARS is a merger of several anime universes - BUBBLE GUM CRISIS, GALL FORCE, AD POLICE and GENESIS SURVIVOR GAIARTH - as the inhabitants come together to race across desert for the Genom Trophy, a prize so coveted that the participants will go to any lengths, however ridiculous, to ensure they win. The closest visible Western parallel is with WACKY RACES. The parodies and in-jokes abound, but even if you don't know any of these classic anime series, don't worry - the liner notes will explain everything you need to know, and many of the gags are purely visual anyway. Fun music, fun animation, pure enjoyment.

HELEN MCCARTHY

NOTE : as we went to press we had not received review copies of SOL BIANCA 1, so it will be reviewed in a later issue.

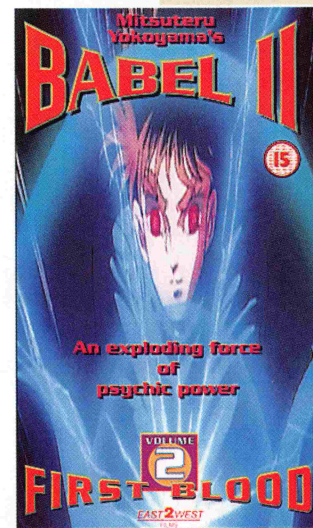
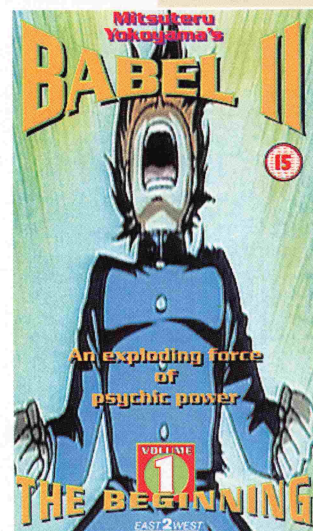
U.S.A. RELEASES

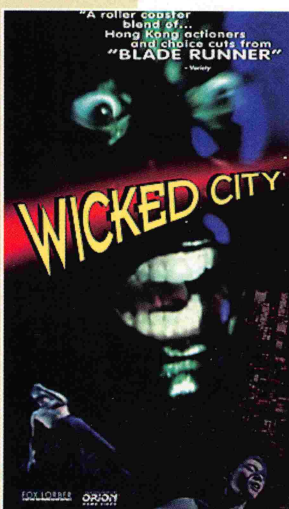
NOTE : US Videotapes will only play back on NTSC-capable vcrs and TVs, not standard British (PAL) equipment.

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST

AnimEigo, ET095-004, 25 mins, English dubbed (Also available subtitled)

I won't waste too much time on the





synopsis, since there's been plenty, dare I say it, too much space already devoted to the goings-on in Fujishima's cop-show anime. Suffice to say, there are two nice-but-dim lady police officers who chase around a lot. This is episode one, and frankly, the only place to go from here is up.

The sub and dub are up to AnimEigo's usual brilliant standards, with particular attentiveness to the replication of the characters' original effect. The Kurokawa/House translation gives us a pair of bimbos steeped in the American vernacular, but since this is also the effect that the originals had on me I'd say that's a perfect translation once more. The English cast in the dub have made very inventive use of the lip sync available, and the translation cannot be faulted, although it is an artful interpretation of an original that, in my opinion, doesn't really warrant such talented effort.

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST plays like a brightly-coloured, squeaky-clean version of CHIPS. No-one is ever in any real danger, criminals are all friendly eccentrics, and at the end, no-one impresses you with any desire to know more. There's no sense of jeopardy, and in many cases the quality of AnimEigo's version only serves to show up the shortcomings of the original. Experienced, intelligent voice actors and actresses spout infantile dialogue before shooting off on yet another car chase. If there's any problem with AnimEigo's version it's that they haven't reproduced the original's anal attention to engine-noise in their sound-mix, but I for one don't care. The AnimEigo sound mix highlights music and dialogue, showing up both for the second-rate offerings they are. YOU'RE UNDER ARREST is sanitised and saccharine, suitably bland for 25 minutes in front of a TV, but not for a video release. For this kind of money, you could see a good movie. I suggest you do.

JONATHAN CLEMENTS

DANGAIOH PART 1
US Renditions, USR-VD2, 45 mins, unrated, English subtitled

DANGAIOH has already had a UK release in dubbed format from Manga Video, but UK fans may want to acquire at least this first tape of the American three-tape release, firstly because it has the original Japanese voicetrack and secondly because this 45 minute story, which sets up the characters and background you need for the other two parts, was edited to under ten minutes in the MV single-tape release. Deborah Grant's translation for USR (with additional help from Yuki Nakajima and Ken Iyadomi) doesn't shrink from profanity where the script calls for it, and so parental discretion is advised; but the

episode can't help but be more faithfully rendered here than in the truncated UK version. The story centres on four teenagers under the control of one Professor Tahsan, who claims that he created them as mecha pilots, and plans to sell them to evil pirate chief 'The Banker' as skilled and deadly weapons, the greatest mech team ever created. They have their doubts about this plan, and even though they have no memories of any past lives they all feel reservations about what he wants to do with them. Four very different temperaments have to work together if they are ever to use the Danfighter planes to escape and seek their true destiny. Toshihiro Hirano is on fine form as designer, though his grasp of the director's reins is less sure; the story isn't outstanding and despite plenty of action-packed fight sequences it never rises to the heights of the greatest giant robot shows like GUNDAM. But it's good to be able to see it as the director intended, and it certainly makes the action and the relationships of part 2 & 3 much clearer and easier to follow. For that alone, it's worth watching.

HELEN MCCARTHY

ZENKI Vol 1
Software Sculptors, SSVS-1007, 90 mins, English subtitled.

The first three episodes of Software Sculptors' second TV series release introduce us to a world that's already familiar territory - the world of the temple kid, that of USHIO & TORA and TENCHI MUYO. But here's the first twist - the temple kid is a *girl*. Chiaki Ozuno is a direct descendant of the monk Enno Ozuno, who bound the might demon lord Zenki to his will and used him to defend his shrine and clan from evil; now in the twentieth century, she and her grandmother, the shrine priestess, scrape a living from tourists, the odd fortune-telling or exorcism, and increasingly scarce donations. Evil is about to awake in the world again as the god/dess Karma sends forth nasty, incredibly elegant minions in perfect makeup to awaken the demonic Seeds of Possession and unleash mankind's foulest deeds against themselves. Now here's the second twist; when Zenki awakens, he's an obnoxious little brat, every teenage girl's worst nightmare of a younger brother, and considerably powered down from his original demonic self. Only Chiaki can control him, and turn him into his true form, an arrogant, violent, ultra-powerful and rather attractive demon who is *definitely* a fully-grown male. Despite the potential for romantic development between the two protagonists, the show seems aimed at a slightly younger audience than USHIO & TORA - it's still action-packed, but there's less of a hard edge of real

life and real relationships under the fantasy battles, and the slapstick of the relationship between young Zenki and Chiaki is broader. Early days yet, though - with a whole TV series run to develop in, the regular characters could turn ZENKI into something very interesting indeed. Neil Nadelman's translation is contemporary without trying too hard to be fashionable, and doesn't make any of the characters sound overtly American or use slang that will date too far. A series with lots of fun and lots of potential.

HELEN MCCARTHY

WICKED CITY
Fox Lorber Video/Orion, FLV-1180, English dubbed, 88 mins.

It seems a bit extreme to compare this to BLADE RUNNER, but that's *Variety* reviewers for you. The US release of this Hong Kong live-action version of an anime classic, already available in the UK from East2West, has a dub which isn't bad, some sfx work which is remarkably sophisticated by HK standards, and a couple of classic Chinese twists on the Japanese story. The issue of mixed race comes in, with one of our heroes being part Reptoid (about as mixed as you can get!) and therefore distrusted and discriminated against, but the real enemy within turns out to be the cool, beautiful career-woman on the team. The motivation and characterisation isn't really important alongside the action sequences, with some stunt work which may not be in the Jackie Chan class of reckless daring but is still more than most of us would like to risk, and some makeups and prosthetics which don't really need the clever cutting employed to back them up. The spider-girl, one of the most chilling charas in the anime, is especially good; you never get a clear look at her but you don't question why as the action proceeds. Produced by veteran Tsui Hark, and presented in the letterbox format with a choice of the Cantonese version with English subtitles for connoisseurs of Oriental voice acting, this is one to add to your HK collection.

RORY DONNELLY

EUROPEAN RELEASES

NOTE : French releases on the SECAM system will play on UK (PAL) equipment in black and white. Belgian, Dutch and other European releases are on the PAL system.

IRIA - ZEIRAM THE ANIMATION Vol 1
Kaze Animation, KV940401, 70 mins approx, Japanese dialogue subtitled in French, PAL.

If you worked hard and got GSCE

French this summer, or if you're old enough to have passed O Level, this is your reward: you can watch this wonderfully designed, well animated tape on a UK system and understand every word. Keita Amemiya's live-action sfx work has been transformed into anime by director Tetsuro Amino, and although changes have been made the result is still a very enjoyable action adventure. The story of both OAVs is more of a prequel to the live-action tale; Iria is a young trainee investigator, working with her adored older brother Glenn and his friend Bob to defend the innocent and track down wrongdoers. She's daring, even reckless, and has considerable talent, and she needs every bit of it when she joins Glenn and Bob on a mission to the space vessel Karma, which has been attacked by a mysterious force. Many of those aboard have been butchered and the cargo has vanished; it's the work of the legendary, supposedly immortal space pirate Zeiram. Iria is ordered off the ship by Glenn as he prepares to blow it up at the end of the first OAV so as to destroy the pirate. The second story offers no certain answer as to whether or not he is dead, though Iria is convinced of it. Apart from frustrating encounters with a cute, cheeky brat named Kei and his friends and with officialdom on the planet where she lands, most of the episode is taken up in slugging it out with Zeiram, who is very wobbly after a somewhat uncomfortable explosion-propelled trip through space and a massively bumpy landing, but still a fighter to be reckoned with.

The subtitles are clear and the translation good, with the ending theme song subtitled in French for clearer comprehension. Aya Hisakawa gives a nice performance as Iria and Jurota Kosugi's vocal skills make Glenn a very attractive character, nicely matching the blond-hunk chara design. The fight scenes and violence are well handled, exciting without being overtly bloody, and I wouldn't hesitate to show this tape to a bright young science fiction fan of ten or eleven. (Parents of young fans should of course watch the tape themselves first, to be sure it's suitable for them and their child.) Highly recommended to anyone of any age who likes good design, direction and acting, and to anyone wanting to practise their French.

HELEN MCCARTHY

subtitles are smaller than on the IRIA tape from the same label, but still reasonably easy to read, and the translation reflects the original Japanese very well, from Ranma and the guys' teenage highschool style to Shampoo's baby-French. The production, reflects the usual Kitty standards; the backgrounds are beautiful, Atsuko Nakajima's chara designs are exquisite and the animation is well up to scratch. The opening and ending themes are very attractive, though sadly not subtitled in French, and the credit sequences at both ends are charming (though I deplore Ranma-kun's taste in pyjamas).

OAV 1, *The Curse of the Contrary Jewel*, has Shampoo borrowing an ancestral brooch from Grandma's collection. Worn one way up, it reveals the true feelings of the wearer; worn the other way up, it completely reverses those feelings. Suddenly Shampoo doesn't love Ranma any more - in fact, she can't stand him - and of course Ranma's pride is piqued and he just has to prove he's as irresistible as ever. Grandma plans to use this to ensure that Shampoo gets her man, and poor Mousse is in despair, but true love triumphs in the end - in a way. The second tale, *Tendo Family Christmas Scramble*, sees Santa intervening in the lives of the family, telling Kasumi she must organise a huge Christmas Eve party. It's a time for peace, goodwill and romance; well, maybe one out of three ... All Ranma's and Akane's admirers, and all *their* admirers too, have high hopes that the party will bring the fulfilment of their Christmas dreams, and despite the chaos and tension of all the preparations for the meal, the family concert, the games, and of course the exchange of gifts, the ending is a happy one. If there's a Ranmaniac on *your* Christmas list, kill two birds with one stone and buy a present that's both romantic and educational - learn to say "I love you" in French and Japanese from the same tape!

HELEN MCCARTHY

KOJIRO PART II

Eps 4, 5 & 6

Kaze Animation, KV-950602, 85 mins approx, French dubbed, PAL

Having missed part 1 of the story I referred back to my sources and found that FUMA NO KOJIRO, the manga on which this OAV series is based, was written by Masami Kurumada, who later created SAINT SEIYA, and designed by Shingo Araki. That tells you, in a nutshell, what to expect. Kurumada does stories of pretty teenage boys with mystical powers and strong emotional bonds pitched up against evil opponents to defend fair ladies. Araki designs pretty teenage boys with big eyes and improbable hair.

And that's what KOJIRO is all about.

The Fuma clan, incarnations of the elemental spirits of the wind, are locked in a battle with the Yasha clan. The prize is the supremacy of one school (both clans are theoretically private high schools, the Fuma school run by a teenage girl who is a prototype of Saori Kido in SAINT SEIYA), the possession of mystic swords of great power, and the supremacy of good or evil in the whole world. Fuma = good, Yasha = evil. It's that simple, the *Lion King* version of morality; if you're a hyena, you must be one of the bad guys. The only exception is Musashi, an honourable fighter who is a mercenary purely because his little sister is dying in hospital and the money he makes pays for treatment to enable her to cling to life a bit longer. All three episodes consist mainly of honourable Fuma, evil Yasha and tortured antihero Musashi hacking at each other with a range of real and psychic weapons, the end result of which is massive blood loss. The PREDATOR movies have less gore than this OAV.

The French dialogue flows well, but since I don't know the original I'll have to take the word of the cover blurb that it's a faithful translation. The voices seem well chosen for the characters. The attempts at lipsync are mostly good. The painted backgrounds are nice. The animation's a bit limited. But you aren't going to buy this OAV for its technical merits. If you like endless swordfights, psychic wars and hothouse emotional tension, it's for you, but it wasn't for me. It looks like one of those shows whose aficionados tell you how great it is once you *really* get into it, around the middle of series 2. (ST Next Generation may spring to mind.) By the way, the cute little sister dies.

RORY DONNELLY



NE-CHAN'S
FAVOURITE
THIS MONTH
IS IRIA:
ZEIRAM THE
ANIMATION

IRIA



Volume 1
O.A.V. 1 & 2

SOUS-TITRÉ EN FRANÇAIS

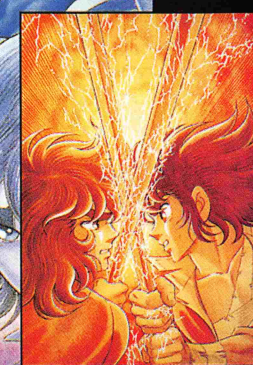
Ranma 1/2



Volume 1
O.A.V. 1 & 2

SOUS-TITRÉ EN FRANÇAIS

Kojiro!



Partie II

VERSION FRANÇAISE

RANMA 1/2 OAVS VOL. 1

Kaze Animation, KV-940201, 60 mins approx, Japanese dialogue subtitled in French, PAL.

Two RANMA OAVs on one PAL tape make a package that many fans of the ablutiously challenged Saitome Junior will find hard to resist. The



As the heady weekend of the Birmingham anime convention approaches, I've been asked to look at a couple of books about fandom itself. Although they have a total of five authors, the driving force behind them is the self-confessed fan and academic, Henry Jenkins. Jenkins' mission is to remove much of the dry, false pretence of objectivity from studies of popular culture, which he does by reminding all critics that there is no shame in admitting that they actually enjoy what they are doing. He takes fan criticism as a worthy model, pointing out that what fan critics may lack in objectivity and grasp of peripherals, they make up for in immediacy, and in their active communication of their enjoyment of the subject matter.

Textual Poachers, written by Jenkins alone, is a reasoned defence of fan culture, pointing out the many ways in which SF fandom forms one of the most intelligent and 'involved' communities of readers, writers and critics. Jenkins takes the reader on a guided tour of the many kinds of 'active' fan communities. This includes details analyses of fan fiction, art, criticism and filking, with particular emphasis on certain activities such as slash fiction (and the legal controversy surrounding it) and fan writers who eventually turned professional. Anime gets a brief mention, as does bootlegging of tapes, but while much of the material will be old news for many fan readers, some of Jenkins' critical points, such as his discussion of 'the powerless elite', might prove interesting to many. For anyone unfamiliar with the many fan traditions and controversies, **Textual Poachers** is a great introduction.

Science Fiction Audiences is more critical, examining the ways that different interest groups approach a text. This will be of particular interest to fan critics, since it devotes considerable space to the way in which fandom constructs its discourse, and then contrasts these methods with the style of professional reviewers, 'mundane' audiences, and certain specialised interest groups such as women, homosexuals and company executives.



CRITICAL MASSES

by JONATHAN CLEMENTS

The authors have deliberately chosen areas of fandom with long, established histories, concentrating on series such as **Dr Who**, **Star Trek** and **Star Trek: TNG**. However, their arguments are often directly applicable to anime and manga fandom. There is, for example, much on the way in which fans are viewed by the media companies who actually produce the material. With so many publishing endeavours finance or marketing-led, with administrators releasing projects based on what they think 'the people want to see', the part played by fandom becomes problematic. Fans are often marginalised because while they must be the most passionate viewers of a given show, they are not the all-important 'floating voters', or mundane viewers, whose purchasing-power is held in the highest regard by the media moguls. In other words, many production companies refuse to view fans as 'real people'. Jenkins and Tulloch look at the ways that different groups of people view different episodes, pointing out that a 'fan-favourite' episode of **Dr Who** is likely to be anathema to the general public. This goes some way

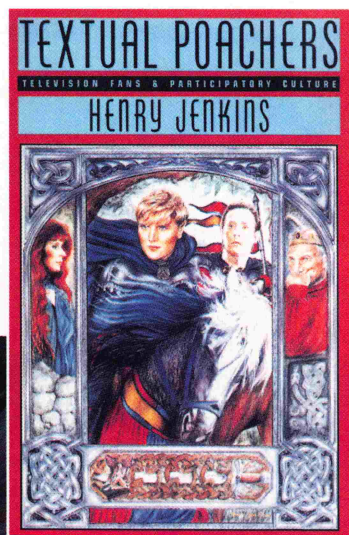
towards explaining the continued proclamations of executives that SF 'doesn't sell' despite the incredible audience figures enjoyed by **Star Trek**, **Star Wars**, **Red Dwarf**, **X Files** etc etc etc etc....

This is not only relevant to anime in terms of the clear division between fans' chosen viewing and the shows that are released by the major companies, but also in the way that we look at certain works. Many anime fans, even the most seriously self-confessed otaku, are still closer to the Japanese 'floating voter' than they are to the Japanese fan. It is only recently that we are hearing anime criticism for example, that bothers to discuss the work in context, as another product from a distinctive director, or as a particularly noteworthy performance from a certain voice actor. True enough, many fans will recognise the distinctive styles of a handful of creators, such as Otomo, Shirow or Takahashi, and even certain distributors such as Streamline, Manga Video or AnimEigo. But whereas many film-goers will go and see a film because Mel Gibson or Clint

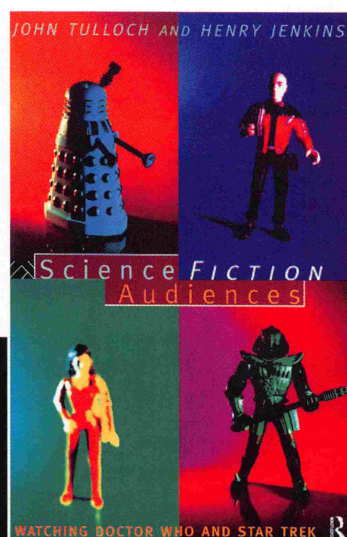
Eastwood gets top billing, few fans are likely to purchase a tape purely because it features good voice work from Chikao Otsuka or astounding direction from Yoshiaki Kawajiri. The major buying blocs of anime consumers still rate their purchases in an adolescent manner, on the basis of cover art or broad genre definition, rather than giving serious thought to the mechanics of production, the animators involved or the level of voice talent. Many professional reviewers are no better, and they are not helped in this by many companies, who, frankly, can't be bothered to give credit where credit is due.

Anyone with a serious interest in reviewing, rather than merely summarising the things they see, could do a lot worse than read **Science Fiction Audiences**. The effect is not unlike the sudden "Huh!? Hmm..." effect one sometimes gets when reading a really challenging review that offers a perspective, right or wrong, one has never thought of before. It certainly demonstrated several underlying flaws in my own reviews, by showing me how different philosophies influence approaches to a text. One can say that a translation is bad, but how can one be sure that it's not a faithful adaptation of a bad script in Japanese, or that a translator's original was not hacked by an editor with a hidden agenda? Similarly, a script might be excellent, but if it is an *improvement* on the Japanese original, is that not unethical? Should jokes be rewritten to reproduce effect rather than meaning? I think they should, but from there it is only a short, logical step to old-Streamline-style rewrites, and the ethics of sub/dub, soundtrack replacement, and other contemporary bugbears.

Science Fiction Audiences doesn't provide any answers, its final, media-studies-influenced response is that all viewpoints are equal, which in itself is a challenge to established wisdom. But in its deliberate presentation of wildly differing methods, it provides food for thought for all but the most deluded of critics, fan and professional alike.



Henry Jenkins,
TEXTUAL POACHERS:
Television Fans and
Participatory Culture.
Routledge, 1992. ISBN:
0-415-90572-9. £12.99



John Tulloch and Henry
Jenkins, **SCIENCE FICTION**
AUDIENCES: Watching Doctor
Who and Star Trek.
Routledge, 1995. ISBN:
0-415-06141-5. £12.99

J.A.I.L.E.D. OR FREE?

The SOAPBOX feature in AFX #6, on the formation of Japanese Animation Industry Legal Enforcement Division and the issues it raised, has brought a strong response. Here's a selection of your views :

GEOFF COWIE,

Milton Keynes, UK :

The actions of J.A.I.L.E.D. may well cause anger and concern among some fans; to others it may be a revelation to discover that widespread fan subtitling and distribution exists!

Since the copyright laws are not on our side, it may be as well to marshal our ideas and some facts before going into battle.

To the video companies, a lost sale is a lost sale, whether caused by piracy or fan taping. How extensive is fan taping? Who knows, but an informed guess would give a figure for the USA of many thousands of tapes a month. Many companies would be pleased if their sales of licenced titles were at this level! Their tactic of pursuing translators and subtitlers could, if pursued with sufficient vigour, dry up the supply of 'spoilers' or new licensed releases within months. It is noteworthy that many new licensed releases are either very obscure or 'hot from Japan', presumably to minimise

sales caused by fan taping and piracy.

In our defence of fannish activity, we can argue that creating artwork, or titling videos & TV unlikely to ever be released in the USA or UK, causes little or no commercial harm. The same may be true of fan activity based on major mass-market titles. Unfortunately, many regard video software as "free" like computer software, but somebody, somewhere, has to pay for it.

SEAN WILSON,

Solihull, West Midlands, UK :

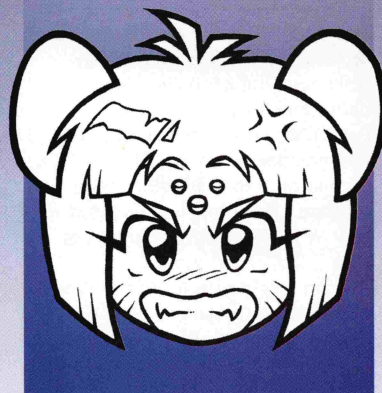
I'm surprised that you so often put down bootleggers or people who buy bootlegs. As an anime fan you should know that it is next to impossible to get hold of quality anime. There's a lot available in the US, but then again not everyone is as fortunate as you to have a dual standard video recorder. Without bootlegs I'd have no RANMA 1/2, DRAGONBALL Z or LEGEND OF LODOSS WAR. Give us desperate fans a break! And it's not like companies like Pioneer LDC or Bandai are about to go broke because of it. These companies are **extremely** rich. And to think that American fans are being encouraged to report each other to the video authorities is terrible. If it wasn't for those same fans there would be very few of the excellently produced fan subtitled videos like LODOSS, GALL

FORCE, OH! MY GODDESS. (After all that, I'd like to say how much I enjoy the new mag.)

PAUL D. MARSHALL,

Rochdale, Lancs, UK :

I think there is a major problem with the way that anime is reproduced for the Western market. The original master copy is sliced up to make it more acceptable to Western viewers, eg the way NAUSICAA was chopped to make WARRIORS OF THE WIND. Otakus like myself want a copy of the original master tape with everything on it still there, including the beginning and end credits with the original songs, which usually get chopped when it is being edited for the Western market. The other problem seems to be censorship (I am not having a go at the censorship laws, just stating what I think the problem is) in the fact that tapes are edited to fit the country of release's censorship laws. This totally infuriates otakus into trying to get video tapes or laserdiscs, sometimes from unscrupulous sources. So I actually think it was a natural response to each countries' censorship laws which has caused the problem which in due course forced the anime companies to form (boo hiss!) J.A.I.L.E.D. I think one way to get round the problem would be to certify the cassettes in a country that has very little censorship, like



Germany, so anime would probably get off almost scot-free most of the time. Most people would have to change to a different format video-player, but we are otakus, we will do whatever it takes to watch anime.

ANIME FX FANZINE OF THE YEAR AWARDS 1995

Once again, we invite you to nominate your favourite fanzines, fan writers and fan artists for honour and glory, including the Big One - the title ANIME FANZINE OF THE YEAR 1995!

Fanzines are vital to a healthy, active fandom; and a healthy, active fandom is good news for the commercial sector in any sphere. That's one reason why we support and encourage the production of more and better fanzines. The other is that many of us here on TEAM AFX came from the fanzine scene ourselves, and we want to see it thriving in anime and manga fandom.

Last year's winners offered a wide variety of good writing, good art and good fun (not all of it clean, but hey, everyone lets their hair down sometimes!) This year, we invite you once again to nominate your favourites for the titles, which come with a certificate and a small anime-related prize as well.

WHAT TO DO

All you have to do is send a letter explaining who you are nominating and why, along with a copy of the fanzine nominated, to our Editor, Helen McCarthy, at our editorial address, marking your envelope FANZINE AWARDS 1995. (Sorry, but we can't return the fanzines - if you don't want to send your original you can send a photocopy.) The categories and last year's winners are listed below. You can nominate for all the categories, or just some of them. The three entrants with most nominations for each title will then be judged by the professionals here at TEAM AFX and a winner in each category selected. You have until January 31st 1996 to send in your nomination and winners will be announced in April 1996.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

We define a fanzine as follows :

1) It is published entirely by a fan or group of fans in their own time, without input from a professional publishing house.

2) It is not published for profit, nor does it receive any commercial sponsorship or support except for the revenues from advertising sales, or any Government or local authority support.

3) It is not devoted exclusively to promoting the products of one company or one video label. (It may, however, be devoted to the work of one artist or group of artists.)

All fanzines nominated must be in a European language, published in Europe, Scandinavia, the USA, Australasia, Canada or South America during the year 1995. Each must print within the fanzine the editor's name and a contact address. Nominations for FANZINE OF THE YEAR must be primarily devoted to anime and manga, that is, at least 50% of the content must be anime and manga related. Nominations for individual article or artwork awards must be anime or manga related but may have appeared in completely unrelated fanzines.

THE CATEGORIES and LAST YEAR'S WINNERS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE FANZINE OF THE YEAR 1994 - ANIMACE, Colchester, UK

EUROPEAN LANGUAGE FANZINE OF THE YEAR 1994 - ANIMELAND, Paris, France

BEST FACTUAL ARTICLE BY A FANWRITER - J.A.M.M., Belgium, for the UROTSUKIDOJI anime/manga overview by Emmanuel van Melkebeke and Steven Smets

BEST OPINION/EDITORIAL BY A FANWRITER - ANIMISM, England for the opinion piece A WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW

BEST FICTION BY A FANWRITER - TALES FROM THE CAJUN SUSHI BAR, England for CHILDHOOD FRIEND, a TONARI NO TOTORO story by Harry Payne.

BEST COVER ARTWORK BY A FAN ARTIST - the ANIMACE 5 cover by Steve Rushbrook

BEST INTERIOR ARTWORK BY A FAN ARTIST - work in LEGEND OF THE O.V.A. FIEND by Jules Merriman

Dear Helen and all the ANIME FX crew,
Firstly I'd like to say that I think the new name is great. I'm sure that a few will complain but I think it's quite cool.

The main reason I'm writing to you is to find out what you and other readers think of something which is starting to annoy me. It's the increasing amount of anime being released as single 25 minute episodes on one tape. It may not sound that important to most people, but when you only have limited space to devote to your hobby it's quite annoying to have a series like THE GUYVER come out on twelve tapes when it could quite easily have been put onto four tapes. (I didn't buy it because of this.) Personally I'd rather pay £12 for two episodes of, say, TANK POLICE on one tape than £5.99 for one episode. I'd be really interested to hear what anybody else thinks of this.

And on a lighter note, has anybody else noticed the anime clips in Michael Jackson's SCREAM video. It's quite apt as he is the one and only living anime character. Check out that nose, it's perfect. For years the press have speculated on who he is trying to look like, is it Liz Taylor, Diana Ross or perhaps Latoya, but I think that we know better, don't we?

Toodle pip,
LEE MARTIN,
Bristol, England.

HELEN : Well, as a solution to the problems of life, re-inventing yourself as an anime chara has a lot to recommend it. As for what recommends single episodes to the UK trade, I think it's the pricing - it may not be the world's best value, but it's low enough that a tape becomes a casual impulse purchase, a pocket-money buy. (A large number of GUYER fans are still in school, making this a major factor.) But plenty of companies in the UK and USA are putting out 2-3 episode tapes, so write and tell them you like their style, and use your video money to support the companies who give you what you want.

Dear ANIME FX,
I have recently become a fan of Masamune Shirow's fantastic creations. I am especially obsessed with his DOMINION TANK POLICE, which is where my problem begins. Getting hold of all the DOMINION videos was child's play, buying a copy of Shirow's INTRON DEPOT merely required a few phone calls and a credit card, but searching for any of the graphic novels has almost forced me into the realm of madness! I have contacted places such as the Sheffield Space Centre, Anime Projects, Comics Warehouse and have even visited Forbidden Planet in London for the sole purpose of finding the graphic novels,

ANIMAIL is YOUR forum for your views, questions or comments on the anime and manga scene. Send your letters to ANIMAIL, AFX, 70 Mortimer Street, London W1N 7DF, UK.

If you'd like a personal reply please enclose a self-addressed envelope with UK postage, or two International Reply Coupons for overseas postage. Please note that our Post Office will not accept foreign stamps for postage of replies from the UK.

but all attempts have been fruitless. I am beginning to wonder if they exist.

Please, please, help me in my quest to fulfil my heart's desire. I would be eternally grateful if you could list every DOMINION graphic novel, assuming there are any, and the places I can purchase these graphic novels from.

My sanity is in your hands!

STANLEY YAU,
Skene, Aberdeen, Scotland

HELEN : Easy-peasy, Stanley! Ask your comic shop to order the DOMINION COLLECTION, 246 pages of Shirow manga out now from Dark Horse comics, who also offer DOMINION SPECIAL : PHANTOM OF THE AUDIENCE. DH's 95/96 catalogue doesn't lie!

Dear Helen-san,
I would just like to congratulate everyone at ANIME FX for a brilliant magazine, and you deserve all the credit you get. I think the new-look, all-colour mag is great and still as enjoyable as ever. I have a few questions :

- 1) Do you know if any of the DRAGONBALL movies are going to be released and when?
- 2) Will there be any more TENCHI MUYO releases in the future?
- 3) If a fan decided to draw a manga strip or comic book how would they go about getting it recognised or published?

One last point, car boot sales are a brilliant place to pick up old anime tapes. I have personally purchased SPACE QUEST FOR F-01 (aka Star

Fleet/ X-BOMBER) for £2, and I have also seen ROBOTECH and BATTLE OF THE PLANETS.

Keep up the good work!

GARY PRINCE,
Shipley, West Yorks., UK

HELEN : Thanks, Gary, glad you like the magazine. As for your questions, as I write there are no definite plans for DRAGONBALL movie releases but keep an eye out for news of how the TV series is faring in the States - if it does well, the movies are sure to follow. Harmony Gold released a dub of the first movie in the States a few years back but it was never available over here. And TENCHI MUYO has been so popular that another OAV series and several specials have appeared in Japan, to say nothing of the TV series, so why not write and tell the folks at Pioneer LDCE that you'd like to see the further adventures of Mr. Masaki over here, too? If you want to get your own manga published, one good route to try is via fanzines. Many major Japanese artists get their start in dojinshi, and here in the West fanzines offer a chance for artists to hone their skills and get some audience reactions, criticism and advice. If you want to aim straight for professional publication, you need to get together a package of samples of your work, including a synopsis for your proposed comic, character drawings and sample pages. Make lots of photocopies of this, then send it or take it to all the comics companies who publish the same kind of stuff and ask if they would be interested in talking to you. It can take a long time and a lot of

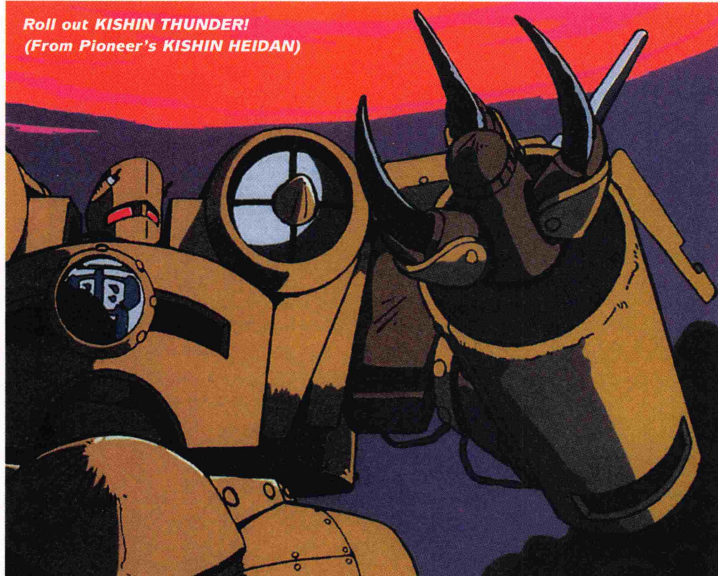
effort, but if you persevere (and if your work is any good, of course), you should eventually find a publisher.

Dear Helen,
I am a big RANMA 1/2 fan and a few weeks back my friend said you can get RANMA comics and cards from Meadowhall in Sheffield. Yippee, I said, got to go and get some! A week later we went. It took us 2 hours to find the shop. When we got there there were tonnes of American comics, books, cards, models, t-shirts and badges. I found the RANMA comics, but no RANMA models or cards! Is there anywhere I can get hold of these in West Yorkshire? And are there any RANMA 1/2 videos? If you know please tell me! Thanks for listening.
BEN HOBSON,
Kirkheaton, Huddersfield, West Yorks, UK

HELEN : What RANMA fans will go through to get a fix ... Next time you're in Sheffield avoid the vast wastes of Meadowhall and go direct to 33 The Wicker, where the guys'n'gals of the Sheffield Space Centre will do all they can to feed your craving for RANMA goodies. They usually have idol cards, posters, stationery, t-shirts and other items in stock. Bear two things in mind - RANMA 1/2 is quite an old show so you may not still be able to get the older merchandise, and it's all imported so not everything you see in the Japanese magazines may get to Britain. As for videos, so far no-one has owned up to having the UK licence for RANMA 1/2, so until that happens the only Western sources are Viz Video in the USA and Kiseki in Australia. Viz are delighted to handle mail order through their Viz Shop-By-Mail service, but you need an NTSC video & TV to play American tapes (or Japanese ones for that matter). Viz also do some RANMA merchandise. Aussie tapes play on PAL recorders but you can't get them via Kiseki in the UK, only Kiseki Australia.

Dear Helen,
What an excellent magazine! In fact, with full colour on every page now, it's better reference material for an eager would-be anime artist than many actual manga. I read Phil Halliwell's letter in August's ANIMAIL about the RANMA problem. It is extremely frustrating to see all that tempting anime available in the US and not the UK, but there is a solution if you're dedicated enough! Dual-format (PAL and NTSC) video recorders are much easier to come by than is generally realised. Try any of the well-known rental shops; I bought one on easy-payment terms for £15 a month. Buying the actual tapes is more costly - which is why you have to be dedicated - but not difficult. First,

Roll out KISHIN THUNDER!
(From Pioneer's KISHIN HEIDAN)



locate a good shop in the US through the pages of your favourite anime magazine. Some of them, such as BOOKS NIPPAN, offer generous membership discounts for an annual fee. Ordering is best done by fax, through most high-street photocopy shops if you don't have access to a fax. For about three pounds you get instant transmission, confirmation of reception, no hassle about different time zones, and no chance of lost post. Fax bureaux should be able to receive and hold replies for you too, so it's excellent for enquiries. Payment is best done by credit card (but watch the spending!) as it avoids having to worry about different currencies. The American postal service is to be avoided at all costs (you just don't want to know the statistics) and so ask for your order to be sent through a private carrier such as United Parcel Service. This is the expensive part. You can expect to pay for shipping by each pound of weight, with a flat fee for the first pound, and small additions for each subsequent pound. This makes it very worthwhile to order in bulk; pool an order with friends, or save for six months to buy all your tapes at once if you can.

The duty on international shipping can be a terrible shock, and it is NOT included in the initial shipping fee. You will probably have to pay this upon delivery (before your goods are handed over!) There is a way round duty; get a friend or relative in the US to send the package to you, marking it 'NO COMMERCIAL VALUE'. Don't ask a shop to do this; if caught, it will probably mean the end of their business. Just as an example, an order of four tapes came to roughly \$150 including shipping, plus £30 duty fee upon delivery; about thirty pounds per tape. Definitely for otaku only, but it does get RANMA to the UK (and well worth it too!)

BOOKS NIPPAN is located at 605 W 7th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90017, and has given me excellent service. On a completely different note, over the past year I've become a complete, no-holds-barred Lum fanatic (an aLumnus?) This green-haired girl has taken my life over! But there isn't much on sale in England. I continually pester Anime Projects for each new video, and I have the Viz graphic novels. And that's it! I understand there was a huge range of URUSEI YATSURA merchandise. Where could I find out about this, and is there an English-speaking UY fanclub anywhere in the world? (Or Japanese, if they print in romaji!) **MATTHEW WEBBER**, Colliers Wood, London, UK.

recorders in a number of mail-order catalogues. The only note of caution is to ensure that your TV will accept NTSC-type playback too; anything over five years old probably won't. As for tape costs, the Japanese have only recently had any releases under £30+ per tape; we're rather spoiled by the low price structure of the UK video market.

Your problem with UY merchandise stems from the fact that this is really an old show, first televised in 1981. Despite its enduring popularity, you just can't expect to see merchandise for a show almost 15 years old turning up everywhere. However, two other American shops which you might like to try are NIKAKU ANIMART and KIMONO MY HOUSE (see our US directory in issue 6 for addresses). Both Bill Kogura of Nikaku and Susan Horn of KMH make regular buying trips to Japan and if you ask them to look out for UY material and specify what you want and what you'll pay, I'm sure they will do their best to help you. I don't know of a dedicated UY-only fanclub, but there are Lum fans in just about every club in the Western hemisphere - try ANIME HASSHIN, a great club whose newsletter THE ROSE contains lots of useful anime information, address in our U.S. directory in issue 6.

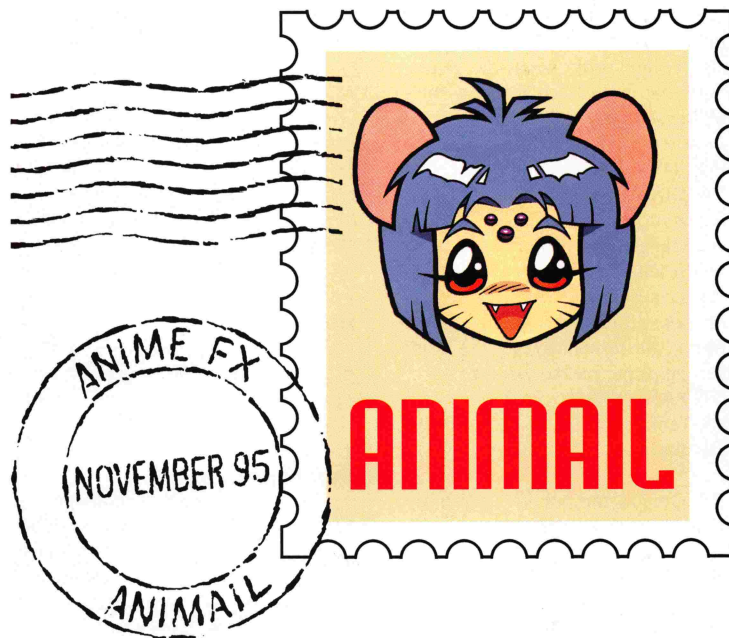
Moshi moshi Helen, Mid August and my anime collection is steadily growing (13 tapes so far!!) - not bad for someone who didn't even have a vcr until mid August 94. One of my recent acquisitions was DIRTY PAIR DOES DISHES. Silly me had a vision of the Lovely Angels scrubbing away at pots & pans!! What do I see instead? The dodgiest dub in the world!

Appalled yet curious, I watched the whole thing and this is where my big question arises: does Pinesalad Productions have a forwarding address of some type? I know that the people involved dubbed the DIRTY PAIR ep. just for fun, but ever since that first viewing it's become a nagging voice in my head to get in contact with Dayvyd Kruze & Co. to express mixed feelings about their efforts. There you have it, personally I reckon they'd be surprised that somebody went to the trouble of sending some feedback that congratulates them or castigates them.

Can you print my full address? Since ANIME FX gets distributed in the US maybe the people at Pinesalad Productions might see this and start the ball rolling MAYBE or anybody else for that matter, write to:

JAMIE KING,
Unit #5/ 28A, Union Road, Penrith,
NSW, 2750, Australia.

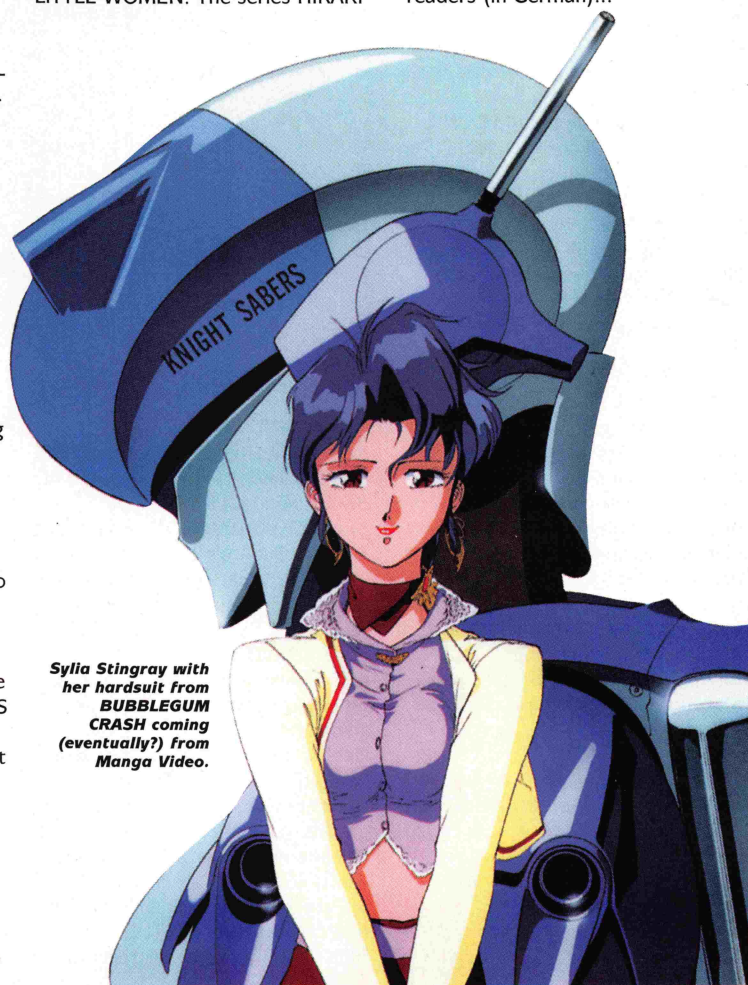
HELEN: Wow, our first washing-up fetishist! A number of other US fan-



groups now do parodies along the same lines as the Pinesalad team, including the irresistibly wacky Seishun Shiteimasu. I hope you manage to get in touch with them.

Dear Helen,
While doing some research I happened to find a letter of Hella Kroeger in AUK #16, about anime on German TV. Most titles I know. I hope someone can tell me the German titles of these series: SEN-NEN JOO, THE URASHIMAN, and LITTLE WOMEN. The series HIKARI

NO DENSETSU I know, but I don't know the German title. I personally think TELE 5 (switched off 3 1/2 years ago) showed real good anime series - THE QUEEN OF 1,000 YEARS, MIYUKI (I've never seen this again), LUCY IN AUSTRALIEN (I don't know the original name, it's about a family who moved with the first colonists [not prisoners] to Australia), and THE ROSE OF VERSAILLES. The original title of MILA SUPERSTAR is ATATSUKU NO. 1. Now some words to your German readers (in German)...



Sylia Stingray with her hardsuit from BUBBLEGUM CRASH coming (eventually?) from Manga Video.

HELEN: Good advice to those who want to access that great range of US releases, especially given the number of tapes released subbed over there but dubbed over here. I've seen NTSC-playback video

Ich suche Folgen der serie MIYUKI (lief bis Jan '91 auf TELE 5). Wer also Folgen, oder sogar die ganze Serie hat melde sich bitte bei mir. (Adresse unten.)

Another question : does a POP'N'TWINBEE manga exist, or a PARODIUS manga?

A question to all readers : I am searching for information about MITSURU ADACHI himself and his releases (manga, OAVs, TV series, Movies, etc) especially information about the series MIYUKI. If anyone can help me, please write to:

STEFAN HEINZE,
Alt-Templehof 13, D-12099 Berlin, Germany.

(I hope you can publish it, and my English wasn't too bad!)

HELEN : *I wish my German was half as good as your English ... If anyone can help Stefan out with German titles for the shows he mentions, please write to him. I can give you a little information : I don't know the German title but SENNEN JOO is the original Japanese title for THE QUEEN OF 1,000 YEARS, also known in the UK and USA as QUEEN MILLENNIA. And there is a POP'N'TWINBEE manga, TWINBEE RAINBOBEL ADVENTURE, by Shinagawa Kid, published by Tokuma Shoten, but it hasn't been translated into English.*

Dear Helen,
I have just finished the new issue of ANIME FX and it's just as brilliant as ever! I especially enjoyed the letters column and I quite agree with Phil Halliwell's letter although he went a bit far in suggesting SLAM DUNK (as it's not well known enough). The fact that Manga Video have money to co-produce GHOST IN THE SHELL and take over L.A. Hero should really mean they can release titles wanted by anime fans who supported them from the start. I have written to you mainly as I am in need of help in finding the third NAUSICAA OF THE VALLEY OF WIND graphic novel, or the comics it collected together. I have searched everywhere and my last hope is you and anyone who reads this letter. If anyone even knows the numbers or volume of the collected comics, please write in! Although I've been a fan of anime for many years, I still learn a bit more every time I read your great mag, so keep it up!
KIN WAI CHAN, 17b Union Street, Maesteg, Mid Glamorgan, South Wales.

HELEN : *Have you tried contacting those very helpful people at VIZ SHOP BY MAIL? They are currently releasing the final volume of the NAUSICAA manga and may have back copies of volume 3. You need a credit card to order by phone, or write for details of how to pay by*

post. See our US directory in issue 6 for the address.

NOTE : *Kin is one of a number of correspondents who also asked questions about if and when various UK companies are planning to release specific titles. However we can't release this information until the companies give it to us, and as soon as they tell us, we announce it in the magazine! So there's no point repeating it here and taking up space that could be used for more of your letters. Keep an eye on the news pages for this kind of information.*

Dear Helen,

1) I've been watching the anime SAMURAI PIZZA CATS (aka KYATTO NINDEN TEYANDE or Stealth Tales of the Kool Kat Gang) on Monday mornings on ITV. What are the characters' Japanese names?
2) I've learned of an anime called THE COCKPIT, based on stories

shown on TV. Although it was released by Disney in 1978, the end credits show the words *Nippon Herald* c 1974. Is this true Japanese animation?

GARY WATSON,
Cramlington, Northumberland, UK.

HELEN : *What a range of questions! To deal with them in order :*

1) *We are preparing a SAMURAI PIZZA CATS feature right now, so be patient until it appears and you'll know what to call our heroes in Japanese!*
2) *See Jim Swallow's feature on THE COCKPIT in this issue. There are no plans to release the manga in the West at present.*
3) *Subaru's sister is Hokuto and the vet is Seiji. The manga has not been released in the UK and there are at present no plans for more TOKYO BABYLON videos, but TOKYO BABYON is part of the X1999 universe so you can follow Subaru's progress there.*



from the manga BATTLEFIELD. Will the OAV and manga be released in the UK and USA?

3) In TOKYO BABYLON, what is the name of Subaru's sister? And is she a psychic? What is the name of the psychic vet? Has the manga been released in the UK? Will there be more TOKYO BABYLON videos?

4) On holiday in Majorca I saw on TV in a cafe two episodes of an anime about Japanese folk tales. One was about a greedy merchant being changed into a snake-like creature after being battered by 3 goblins in a temple, and the second episode was about a super strong woman. Do you have any info?

5) Also, I once saw an anime-style film called JACK AND THE BEANSTALK, which was recently

4) *There are quite a few series based on Japanese folktales. I don't recognise either of the stories you mention - can any of our Spanish readers help out with some details as to what this series might be?*

5) *Yes, the copyright line is the clue. If the animation was made by a Japanese company and only later had a Western release, it's anime all right. Western companies have been buying anime and putting their own name on it for years - it's amazing how many newer fans think that Manga Video or Kiseki make every video they distribute!*

Dear Helen,
I must admit that when I first picked up your old magazine ANIME UK 3 years ago I wasn't going to

buy it, just read it in the shop. It was a lot dearer than MANGA MANIA and had less pages and no comics. Then I got hooked on your great pictures and the information about Japanimation and manga all over the world and I used a lot of your articles for my art and social studies projects. Now ANIME FX is cheaper and full colour. In fact I'm getting quite fed up with other magazines, not just MANGA MANIA but fanzines as well, because I keep reading information and seeing pictures there that I've already read in ANIME UK or AFX! Sometimes a couple of years ago! Do they copy you or what? They should get their own information and write about different things, not just rehash your stories. Anyway keep up the good work because you are THE BEST.

NIGE HARRIS,
Edinburgh, Scotland.

HELEN : *What can I say except the cheque's in the post, Nige? Seriously though, don't be too hard on our esteemed fellow-anime publications. They can only write about what comes out; some of them concentrate more on British or US releases and less on Japanese or European stuff; but no-one can write about material that doesn't exist, so to some extent we will all cover the same ground. And in the same way, they can only write about what's in the anime; the story, characters, cast and staff are the same and there's only so much information available, so some of it is bound to be duplicated. We are really lucky in having a great information and translation team who work hard for us - take a bow, Peter, Masaaki and Jonathan! - and we also have a large archive to refer to, thanks to the unselfishness and dedication of Steve Kyte; all this gives us lots of help in finding material on old and new shows. Writers on other magazines do use some of our earlier issues as reference for their own work, but that's not unusual. As you will see if you look at some of our articles, our writers also refer to the works of others, and tell you which books or articles they've looked at so that you can go there for further information. (Sometimes writers don't acknowledge their sources, which is very rude, but professional discourtesy happens in every field!) And as for fanzines, it's quite normal for fanzine writers to use material from professional magazines as a basis for this work; again, this should be acknowledged, and of course good writers, whether fan or pro, add something of their own to their research material. But as long as we can keep providing you with a magazine you enjoy, we're happy - and I'm sure every other anime zine editor, fan and pro, would say the same thing!*



MIND BREAK



Test your anime and manga knowledge with our selection of brainteasers. The **NEO-OTAKU** level is based entirely on material released in the UK and USA, so you should be able to get by without too many problems. As for the higher levels, well ... try them and see!

NEO-OTAKU

1. Name the orphan who steals the alien module in volume 4 of KISHIN HEIDAN
2. What is the name of the girl pirates' spaceship in SOL BIANCA?
3. What is Captain Tokyo's real name?
4. Name the composer of the UK soundtrack for CYBER CITY OEDO 808.

OTAKU

1. In which year did the NINJA HIGH SCHOOL American manga title first appear?
2. Which French zine is published by TONKAM?
3. What do the letters C/FO stand for?
4. What is the origin of the title for the manga and OAV series BAS-TARD!!!?

SUPER-OTAKU

1. What is the French title for SAINT SEIYA?
2. Which voice actress plays Ranma-chan in the US dub?
3. Who designed the characters in MEGAZONE 23 PART 1?
4. Which record company releases the work of Megumi Hayashibara?



Here are the answers to last month's quiz - how many did YOU get?

NEO-OTAKU :

1. Eva Braun
2. Koichi Ohata
3. COBRA
4. ULTIMATE TEACHER

OTAKU :

1. 1989
2. Japanese : Leo, American : Kimba, American series : KIMBA THE WHITE LION
3. Toys Press
4. Anime V.

SUPER-OTAKU :

1. The two man team who created scores of manga hits including Doraemon, composed of Hiroshi Fujimoto and Atsushi Fujio
2. Ocean Studios
3. Cutey Suzuki was the voice of Iczer-3
4. TENSHI NO TAMAGO, which translates as ANGEL'S EGG



NEO-OTAKU: 3



OTAKU:4



SUPER OTAKU:1

Miss **HARUMI ARAKAWA**, 1815-4 Ouya, Omiya-shi, Saitama, 330 Japan : "I'm a Japanese university student. I saw news of ANIME FX in a catalog of COMIC MARKET 47. I want to talk about animation and comics with a lot of people. My favourite anime is TOTORO and SAILOR MOON, AKIRA, etc ... Please put my name and address in a pen pal column!"

MELISSA SUMNER McLEISH,

c/Lopez de Hoyos #188, 6A, 28002 Madrid, Spain : "Konnichiwa! I'd love to have penpals from all over the world so ... what are you waiting for? Shine up your pen and write! Faves are : DRAGONBALL, SAILOR MOON, OH MY GODDESS!, RANMA 1/2."

LEE MARTIN, 5 Queens Road, Keynsham, Bristol, BS18 2NE, UK "Is there anybody in JAPAN who would like to swap copies of NEWTYPE for copies of ANIME FX, and to write to a 25 year old male who's into Rumiko Takahashi, Hayao Miyazaki, TENCHI MUYO!, MACROSS PLUS, AAA MEGAMISAMA? I'd also like to hear from anybody in my area interesting swapping anime and manga, maybe starting a club?"

CHRIS THWAITES, 2 Stonechat Close, Ferndown, Dorset, BH22 9QH, England : "I'm 23, looking for penpals any age, sex, country. Current anime/manga faves include RANMA 1/2, URUSEI YATSURA, USHIO & TORA and many more. I'd love to set up a swap club for anime, esp. with fans in Southern England. All letters will be replied to! PLEASE WRITE!"

NEAL CLARK, 21 The Ridgeway, Market Harborough, Leics., LE16 7HG, England : "Teenage manga freak looking for penpals anywhere in the world. I love PATLABOR, MACROSS PLUS and anything else I can get my hands on. I'm desperate to hear from any of you otaku out there, so drop me a line - I'll be happy to write back!"

KARL GRONNEBERG, A8

Stanleyhill Hostel, Lerwick, Shetland Isles, ZE1 0OW, Scotland "Hi, I'm 28 years old, looking for penfriends from around the world, but especially Japan. Into all types of manga, but I love anything with a cyberpunk feel. I hope to hear from you soon."

LEE BURBRIDGE, 8 Lennox Road South, Southsea, Hants, PO5 2HT, UK : "Manga & anime are my life. However I also love sentai and you don't get a whole lot of it here in the UK! I'd like a Japanese, American or Chinese penpal who likes Gojira, Gamera, Ultraman, Blueswat, Kamen Rider and the various sentai groups, etc. I'm very interested in the Japanese fanscene and I'd like to trade. I love drawing and videogaming."

JAMES SMITH, 3 Hawthorn Close, Knodishall, Saxmundham, Suffolk, IP17 1XW, England : "I'm a 14 year old boy who is mad on anime & manga (especially DRAGONBALL Z, RANMA 1/2, MAISON IKKOKU, GUNDAM and DOMINION TANK POLICE). I am looking for a Japanese or Chinese (especially female) penfriend around my age. Must write in English, from anywhere in the world."

TOM OAKES, 64 Dane Road, Sale, Cheshire, M33 2LQ, UK : "Hi, I'm 14, seeking Japanese/ Chinese penpals, male or female, to help me find new manga & anime, talk about computers & whatever interests you. I also like John Woo films. Fave manga AKIRA, GUNSMITH CATS and DOMINION, fave anime THE GUYVER and DOMINION. I'd like to know more about DRAGONBALL!"

JASON POAGE, 8307 Shady Well Court, Westchester, OH 45069, USA : "I'm a 17 year old boy and anime fanatic! I want sources for UNEDITED anime & manga titles like GUNSMITH CATS, PLASTIC LITTLE, DRAGONBALL, etc. I'm planning a new sci-fi manga but need some help. Penpals would be great too (specially female) - anywhere in the world is fine!"

DONALD MACDONALD, 21 Glen Terrace, Denny, Stirlingshire, FK6 5DE, Scotland : "Hi, I am a 13 year old boy who would like to correspond with any girls who are interested in manga or anime. Fave videos - STREETFIGHTER II, GENO-CYBER, TOKYO BABYLON, MACROSS, ANGEL COP, PATLABOR, ORGUSS 02 and SPACE ADVENTURE COBRA. I will reply to every letter."

DRAHC, c/o L. Lennox, 9 Beaverbank Place, Edinburgh, EH7 4ER, Scotland : "I'm an ex-teenage hybrid of Agito (GUYVER 3) and Vampire Hunter D. Otaku, I also 'guyv' over GETTA/VENGER ROBO; BRAVE RAIDEEN; ULTRA BROTHERS: PROJECT A-KO (preferring B-Ko) GAMERA; GODZILLA and SUPER SENTAI (esp mecha). I want to hear from whoever (!) esp my long-lost penpal Emma Walton, formerly of St. Andrews, Scotland."

Because of the time it takes to print the magazine it may be some time before your request appears. Please be patient!

PEN PALS

CONTEST CORNER

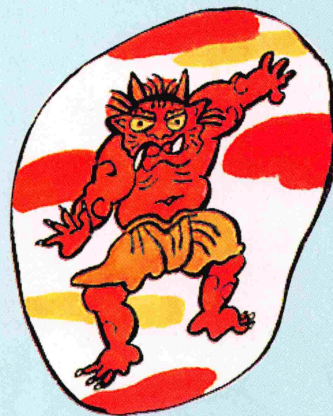
The Kodansha Library publishes English translations of Japanese works, primarily for Japanese students of English. They include many classics of Japanese literature,

and quite a few of the stories that have inspired anime, like Kenji Miyazawa's *Night Train To The Stars* (the inspiration for Gisaburo Sugii's film *NIGHT ON THE GALACTIC RAILROAD*) and Osamu Dazai's *Run, Melos!* (the basis for the film of the same name). We have a set of three volumes of folktales and childrens' stories, *ONCE UPON A TIME IN JAPAN*, plus six other books (including stories by Dazai and Miyazawa) to give away. Just send us your name and address on a postcard to arrive before 30th November, and the set of folk tales or one of the other books could be yours!

Many thanks to Robert Whitehouse of Kodansha for providing the books.

ONE PERSON'S JUNK IS ANOTHER'S FIND OF THE CENTURY ...

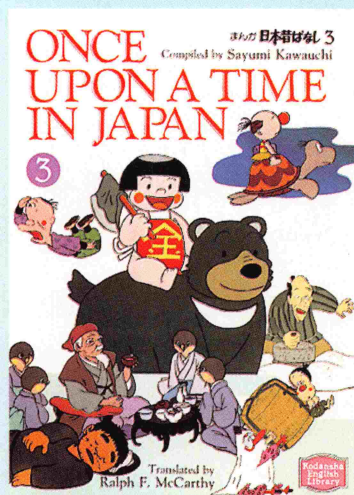
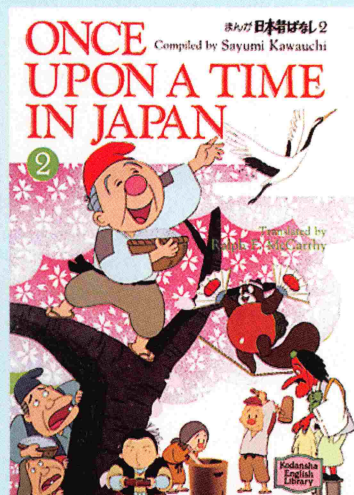
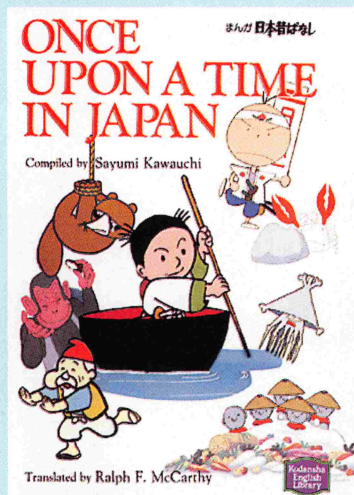
Our cupboards are barer now, thanks to everyone who sent in entries for our CLEAROUT CONTEST. Special thanks to all of you who sent picture postcards - we got some great ones, and those with your own artwork on were especially enjoyable. They brightened up the office no end! The other amazing thing about this contest was the number of female readers who sent



postcards - more than for any of our previous contests. Why this one, I wonder?

AFX goodie bags of Japanese and US anime/manga items are on their way to these entrants:

LIZ THOMAS, Stretford, Lancs., UK; **SUZUKO KUSU**, Edinburgh, Scotland; **OLIVIA CHUNG**, Wolverhampton, UK; **JAN-WILLEM NIJS**, Doorn, The Netherlands; **CHRISTOPHE DE MELIO**, Kraainem, Belgium.
And to these subscribers:
ARRAN DAY (444) East Grinstead, Sussex, UK; **MARTIN RUSS** (460), Ipswich, Suffolk, UK; **STEPHEN ADAMS** (505) Grimsby, S. Humberside, UK; **VERONIQUE DAEMEN** (578), Ans, Belgium; **ROBERT LYN DAVIES** (0092), Cwmbran, Gwent, Wales



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CONVENTION LISTING

We list all conventions with a significant anime/manga programme content providing we are notified at least three months before the convention date. We also list regular anime club meetings with a contact name and address or number. Please note that for any further information about these events, you have to contact the organisers.

EUROPE

TWICE EVERY MONTH - London Anime Club holds screening get-togethers at the Daiwa Japan Foundation. Meet Japanese and gaijin otaku just like you! Contact Dragon at 37a Station Road, Hendon, London NW4 4PN, tel 0181 202 9038 evenings.

NOV 3-5 RECONTANIMATED - anime extravaganza in Birmingham! Screenings, dealers, artshow, lots more. Just time to book if you write to L. Sharman, 13 Prescott Close, Banbury, Oxon, or email denzil@chisaii.demon.co.uk or davidrow@ryoohki.demon.co.uk

NOV 24-25 BENELUXCON 21/ GRAPHICON 1995 ; The Art of Illustration. SF-BELGIUM, Zandkapelweg 18, 2200 Noorderwijk, Belgium. Animators, authors and more.

USA

NOV 10-12 ANIMEast, Radium Dynamix, 1544 Irving Street, Suite #201, Rahway, NJ 07065, USA. Hiroyuki Kitazume, Mio, Monkey Punch, art show, dealers, Tezuka Awards. Fly out there straight from ReConTanimeTed!

1996 MAR 2 - FANIME CON 96, PO Box 642028, San Jose, CA 95164-2028, USA, email abunai@IBM.NET, no further details as yet.

MAR 8-10 KATSUCON 2, Virginia Beach, Katsu Productions Ltd., 1827-2 Grayland Street, Blacksburg, VA 24060, USA. Tel (001) 540 953 1699. Many guests, innovative programming, friendly con.

MAY 31-JUN 2 PROJECT A-KON 7, 3352 Broadway, Ste. 470, Gardland, TX 75043, USA, email phoenix@pic.net. Guests Ben Dunn, Tavisha Wolfgarth, Rosearik Rikki, Neil Nadelman and more.

RETAIL ROUNDUP

Reader Dan Caggiano of San Diego, CA, recommends the service offered by CRITICS CHOICE. They offer a search service for all difficult-to-locate video titles distributed in the USA, including anime on US labels. So for that old release or hard-to-find title, contact CRITICS CHOICE, THE VIDEO SEARCH LINE, P.O. BOX 808, ITASCA, IL 60143-0808, USA.

FANZINE FILE

FUTURANIME! 5 has a new address ; Keith Elcombe, aka The Judge, is now at 6 Saxon Court, Kingsway Gardens, Andover, Hants., SP10 4BU. The other change is an enforced price rise to cover printing costs - the zine now costs 70p for 20 pages, though existing subscribers can extend their subscription at 55p per issue. The main strengths of FUTURanime are a willingness to state strong opinions, whether or not it leads to their being dropped from video companies freebie lists (a policy other zines don't always follow, for all their proclamations of fannish 'independence'!) and a pleasantly varied content. This issue has a MINAMICON report, fan manga, comment on Manga Video's TV outings, a small but good news page (the ONLY report I have seen in any

fanzine of Manga Video's action against a German company using the word MANGA) and reviews. Why not try an issue?

TOOCLOSE is a new dojinsi from Ian Waugh, 3 Swallow Hill, Thurlby, Bourne, Lincs., PE10 0JB, UK. At £2.50 for 28 pages it may seem a bit steep, but this includes colour covers and paper/print price rises are hitting fanzines everywhere. Ian's artwork and story are strongly influenced by Masamune Shirow, and none the worse for it. The art is clean, with a good sense of

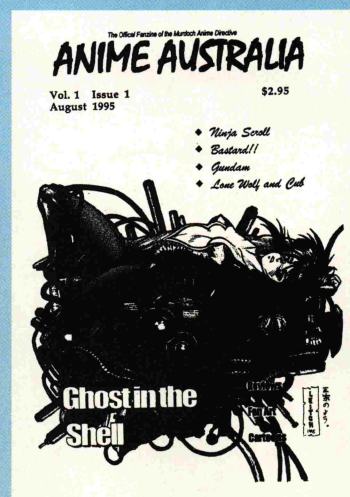
space, and the panel arrangement is crowded but easy to read, creating a sense of the tension and claustrophobia of a warzone. As with so much fan art, the main weakness lies in an imperfect understanding of human anatomy and the techniques of draughtsmanship, but time and practice will remedy that. TooClose is the story of a multi-ethnic all-girl mobile suit squad in the urban warzone that is Paris in 2011, and on the strength of this first episode it should be worth looking out for. Ne-chan liked it and says she wants a mobile suit for Christmas!

AUSTRALIA CALLING!

The Murdoch Anime Directive (M.A.D. for short) is a lively anime club based at Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia. They have regular screenings and publish a newsletter and a "(hopefully!) quarterly" fanzine, ANIME AUSTRALIA. The first issue, coverdated August 95, has a clean, uncluttered layout with some good fan art; in fact I think it's a pity that the talented Andrew Leitch, who is also editor and club president, decided to run a piece "after" Shirow on the cover when both he and contributors like Coreynn Tan do such nice art of their own. The zine includes material on the latest anime and manga like GOLDEN BOY and older shows such as GUNDAM, manga translations and help with learning Japanese, plus a listing of latest Australian releases. (If I remind you that Australia shares the UK's PAL format and English language, and tell you that RANMA 1/2 TV episodes are being released there

on video, will that grab your attention? I thought so!) The club would appreciate correspondence from both individual fans and other clubs worldwide in English, Japanese or French. To contact them, and find out how to get ANIME AUSTRALIA, write to Andrew Leitch, President, at M.A.D. c/o Guild

FAN SCENE



Artwork © Andrew Leitch

of Students, Murdoch University, South Street, Murdoch, WA 6150, Australia.

RED LEOPARD III is available soon from Peter Cullen, 329 Finchampstead Road, Wokingham, Berks, RG40 3JT, UK

The artwork is © Phil Laskey

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FANZINES?

LET US LEAD YOU ON!

RED LEOPARD III

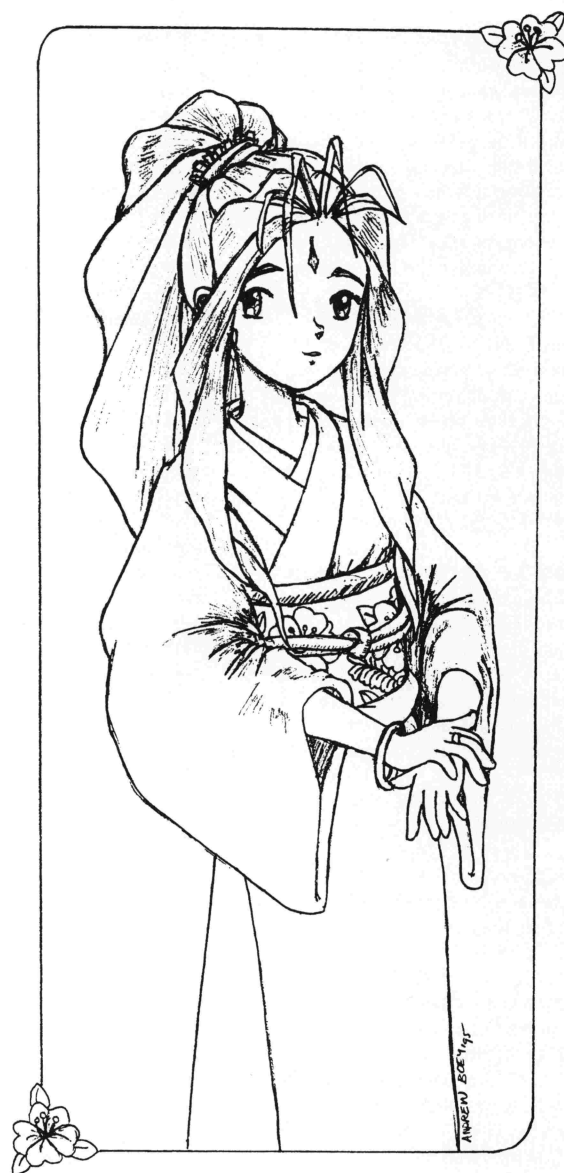


© Ian Waugh

Rally Vincent
(Gunsmith Cats)
by
KAY SAKAMOTO
(California, USA)



Yohko (Devil Hunter Yohko)
by
AUTUMN ROBSON
(London, UK)

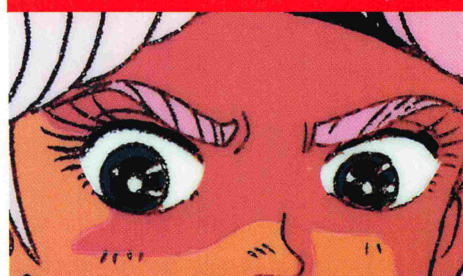


Belldandy (Ah My Goddess) by
ANDREW BOEY
(Adelaide, S. Australia)

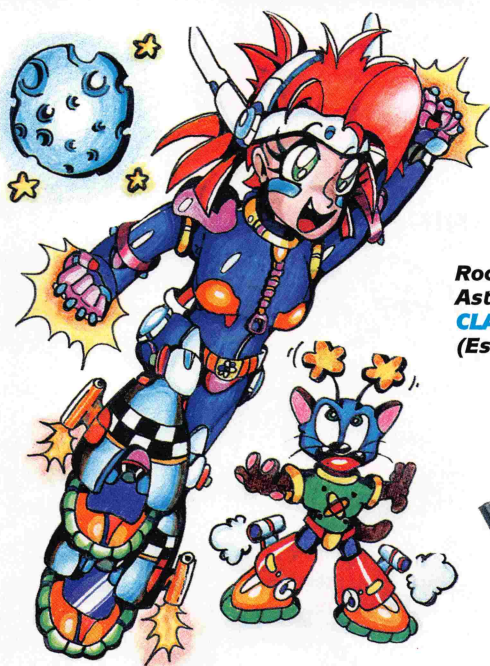
GUIDELINES

We accept colour and black and white artwork. Please do not exceed A4 size (297 x 210mm). Good quality photocopies are preferable to sending us the original. Pack to avoid creasing as this may show up when printed and DO NOT fold artwork! Get drawing!

アイキャッチ

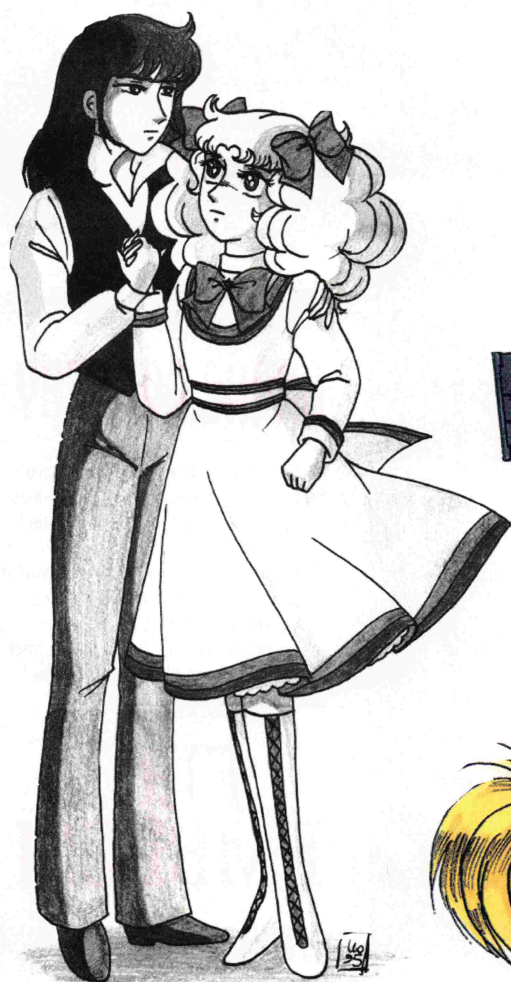


eyecatch



Largo Cyberdroid
(Bubblegum Crisis)
by
GLENN JACKSON
(Essex, UK)

**Rocket Girl and
Astro Cat** by
CLARE PRICE
(Essex, UK)



Candy & Terry
(Candy Candy)
by
LEONOR PINELA
(Lisbon, Portugal)

**Rally Vincent and
Minnie-May Hopkins**
(Gunsmith Cats)
by
KAY SAKAMOTO
(California, USA)



Ingredients

1 Pkt Orange Jelly
1/2 Pint Ginger
Ale
Tin Mandarin
Pieces



*AH OISHII?
AH DELICIOUS?

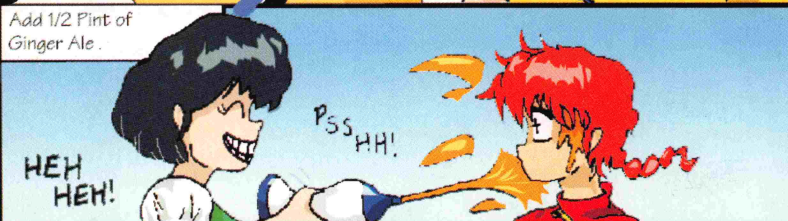


Ranma 1/2 © R. Takahashi, Shogakukan, Kitty Film, Viz Video



Boil 1/4 Pint of water & melt
Jelly.

Add 1/2 Pint of
Ginger Ale.



Open Tin.
Add Juice
& Fruit
Place in the Fridge.



Serve when set!



GUN SMITH CATS CD WORLD

GUN SMITH CATS merchandise was around before the current anime explosion. CD releases around the time of the second manga volume included one with 7 vocal and 4 instrumental tracks by Japanese performers Silk, SeSera, RG14 and Water Club Band and including this lovely A4 size pinup as a premium. Bearing in mind that at this time the Cats had no soundtrack, since the anime hadn't been made, it's an 'image CD', collecting tracks reflecting the GSC 'mood' and inspiration. A 'Special Coupling CD' united the Gun Smith Cats and Sonoda's other American creation Bean Bandit, and another RIDING BEAN musical outing described as 'the L.A./Chicago C.D.' was produced in the USA by David Garfield and Alan Hirshberg using American musicians.

© TOSHIBA EMI, SONODA, YOUXEM



ANIME GALLERY

We've only got one picture from this but it's a beauty! and it takes pride of place on our back cover!

The new anime based on a popular Nintendo game looks gorgeous. Many thanks to Kodansha for permission to use this picture, and to Sakura Studio for their assistance.

FIRE EMBLEM

PRINT GLITCH

Owing to a printing error the last few lines of our Shingo Araki feature slipped off page. Here they are, bringing you up to date on this remarkable man's career.

1993 BURAI Novel illustrations, chara designs for game

1994 AOKI DENSETSU SHOOT (series) Anime dir., chara design (Blue Legend Shoot)

1995 KOZO KAGAKU SEKAI GULLIVER BOY (series) In-betweens (Structure Science World Gulliver Boy) DAISAKU IKEDA (OAV series) Anime dir., episode dir (this is the name of the lead chara, real-life founder of a religious sect) AOKI DENSETSU SHOOT (film) Anime dir., chara design.

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